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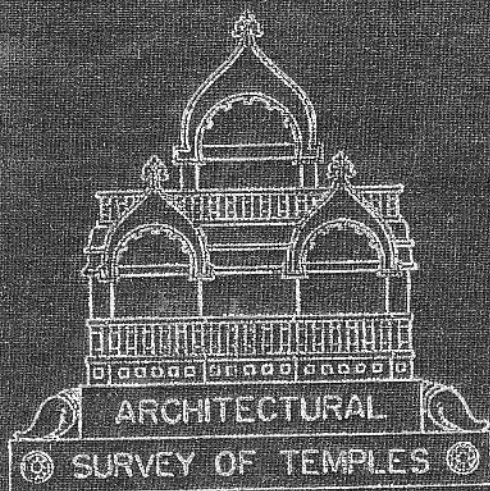
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AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF TEMPLES OF KERALA



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BY

H. SARKAR

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF PLATES	x
PREFACE	xiv
CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II : THE BACKGROUND	10
1. Geographical	10
2. Historical	16
A. Early Chēras and their Contemporaries	16
B. The Āy-vēḷs	17
C. The Second Chēra Dynasty	20
D. The Mūshikas	32
E. The Vēṇāḍu rulers	34
F. The Zamorins of Calicut	36
G. Contact with European Powers	37
H. The Vijayanagara Rulers and the Nāyakas	39
I. Rise of Centralized Administration	40
3. Architectural	40
A. Introduction	40
B. The Chēra rock-shelter	41
C. The Cave-temples	43
D. Relics of Buddhism	50
E. Jaina Vestiges	51
CHAPTER III : ARCHITECTURE	56
1. Introduction	56
2. Beginnings	59
3. Building Materials	61
4. Types of Ground-plan and their Distribution	63
5. Different Aspects of Elevation	73
A. General	73
B. The Adhishṭhāna	75
C. The Bhatti and Prastara	81
6. The Shrine-Interior	84
7. Minor Features	87
A. General	87
B. The Sōpāna	89
C. The Praṇāla	89
D. The Balipīṭha	93
8. The Phases	95
A. General	95
B. The Early phase (A.D. 800-1000)	97
C. The Middle phase (A.D. 1001-1300)	97
D. The Late phase (A.D. 1301-1800)	99
9. Influences	101

CHAPTER IV : ART AND ICONOGRAPHY	103
1. Introduction	103
2. Stone-sculptures	104
A. Early phase	104
B. Middle phase	109
C. Late phase	113
3. Images in Clay or Stucco	116
4. Wood-sculptures	117
5. Metal-sculptures	120
6. Mural paintings	122
CHAPTER V : EARLY PHASE	132
1. Introduction	132
2. Temples in Āy Country	133
A. Introduction	133
B. Square Drāviḍa shrine	135
(i) General	135
(ii) Description	135
Parthivasekharapuram : Pārthasārathi temple	135
Munjira : Śiva temple in Tirumalai temple-complex	138
Vilinjā : Śiva temple	139
C. Rectangular Drāviḍa shrine	141
(i) General	141
(ii) Description	141
Vilinjā : Bhagavatī temple	141
D. Square Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa shrine	143
(i) General	143
(ii) Description	143
Kazhakutam : Mahādēva temple	143
E. Circular Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa shrine	145
(i) General	145
(ii) Description	145
Perumpaladur : the site of Nāraṇattukkāvu	145
3. Temples in Chēra Country	147
A. Introduction	147
B. Square Drāviḍa shrine	148
(i) General	148
(ii) Description	149
Netirimangalam : Śiva temple	149
C. Square Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa shrine	150
(i) General	150
(ii) Description	154
Tirukkulasekharapuram : Kṛishṇa temple	154
Methala near Thiruvanchikulam : Kīlataḷi Śiva temple	158
Tali : Śiva or Nityavichārēśvara temple	160
Panniyur : Lakshminārayaṇa shrine in Ayyappaṇ temple-complex	161
D. Circular Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa shrine	163
(i) General	163
(ii) Description	165

CONTENTS

Polpulli : ruined Śiva temple	165
Kaviyur : Śiva temple	165
E. Apsidal Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa shrine	167
(i) General	167
(ii) Description	167
Manjeri : Ayyappaṇ shrine in Karikkaḍ-kshētram	167
Triprangod : Kālasaṁhāramūrti temple	169
Trikkandiyur : Śiva temple	170
Tiruvannur : Śiva temple	172
4. Temples in Mūshika Country	172
A. Introduction	172
B. Square Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa shrine	173
(i) General	173
(ii) Description	173
Eraman : Chālappuṇattu-ambalam	173
Kannapuram : Kuruvakkāva temple	175
Tricchambaram : Rājarājēśvara temple	176
Tricchambaram : Kṛishṇa temple	177
C. Circular Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa shrine	179
(i) General	179
(ii) Description	181
Ramantali : Nārāyaṅkaṇṇūr temple	181
CHAPTER VI : MIDDLE PHASE	186
1. Introduction	186
2. Square shrine	188
A. Drāviḍa	188
(i) General	188
(ii) Description	190
Chalapuram : Kaṭṭilmāḍam	190
B. Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa	191
(i) General	191
(ii) Description	192
Peruvanam : Māḍattilappaṇ shrine	192
Edappal : Sukapuram Dakṣiṇāmūrti temple	193
Maniyur : Subrahmaṇya temple	193
Pullur : Śrī Kōḍavalam Viṣṇu temple	195
Anantapuram : Anantapadmanābhasvāmī temple	197
3. Circular shrine	199
A. Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa	199
(i) General	199
(ii) Description	200
Manjeri : Subrahmaṇya shrine in Karikkaḍ-kshētram	200
Pulpatta : Śiva temple	202
Trichur : Vaḍakkunnātha temple	204
Triprayar : Rāma temple	206
Peruvanam : Irattāyappaṇ shrine	208

Tirunillai : Śiva temple	209
Venganellur : Tiruvembilappan temple	212
Udayamperur : Peruntirukkōyil	213
Nemam : Nīramaṅkara temple	215
Punalur : Śrī Trikōṭēśvara Mahādēva temple	217
4. Apsidal shrine	219
A. Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa	219
(i) General	219
(ii) Description	220
Kizhavellur : Vāmana temple	220
Panjal : Śrī Ayyappaṅkāvu temple	222
Nedumpura : Śiva temple	223
Triprangod : Kālasaṁhāramūrti temple	225
Trikkandiyur : Śiva temple	227
Tiruvannur : Śiva temple	228
CHAPTER VII : LATE PHASE	230
1. Introduction	230
2. Square shrine	234
A. Drāviḍa	234
(i) General	234
(ii) Description	235
Quilon : Gaṇapati temple	235
Quilon : Śrī Rāmēśvara temple	237
Kanjirapalli : Gaṇapati temple	239
B. Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa	240
(i) General	240
(ii) Description	241
Kalpathi (Palghat) : Viśvanātha temple	241
Podiyal : Kṛishṇa temple	243
Udayanapuram : Subrahmaṇya temple	244
Kozhikode : Tali temple	246
Chengannur : Narasimha temple	249
3. Circular shrine	252
A. General	252
B. Drāviḍa	252
(i) General	252
(ii) Description	253
Tiruvallam : Paraśurāmēśvara temple	253
Valaya-Udayadichchapuram : Śrī Valaya-Udayēśvaram temple	255
C. Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa	256
(i) General	256
(ii) Description	258
Navaikulam : Śrī Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa temple	258
Ettumanur : Śiva temple	259
Tiruvalattur : Bhagavatī temple	261
4. Apsidal shrine	263
A. General	263

CONTENTS

B. Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa	264
(i) Description	264
Payynnur : Subrahmanya temple	264
Mangalapadi : Sadāśiva temple	265
Aduru : Mahāliṅgēśvara temple	267
5. Elliptical shrine	269
A. General	269
B. Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa	269
(i) Description	269
Vaikam : Śiva temple	269
Select Bibliography	272
Glossary of Indian Architectural Terms	273
Index	279

LIST OF PLATES

FRONTISPIECE : Cochin, Mattencheri palace : mural paintings depicting Rāma's Coronation

PLATE

- I Kaviyur : rock-cut cave, relief of a chieftain
- II Kaviyur : rock-cut cave
 - A. *Dvāra-pāla*
 - B. *Ṛishi*
- III A. Viliṅjam : rock-cut cave, reliefs on façade
B. Kottukal : rock-cut cave, general view
- IV A. Bhrantanpara : unfinished cave, general view
B. Irunilancode : rock-cut cave, reliefs of Dakṣiṇāmūrti
C. Kottukal : rock-cut cave, relief of Hanumān
- V A. Viliṅjam : Bhagavatī temple
B. Image of Mātṛikā
C. Dakṣiṇāmūrti
- VI Kazhakuttam : Mahādēva temple
- VII Kazhakuttam : Mahādēva temple, details of *adhishṭhāna* and wall
- VIII A. Kazhakuttam : Mahādēva temple, image of Viṣṇu in a sub-shrine
B. Atiyannur : Viṣṇu temple, image of Viṣṇu
- IX Viliṅjam : Śiva temple
- X Netirimangalam : Śiva temple, close view of unfinished wall
- XI Tirukkulasekharapuram :
 - A. Kṛishṇa temple
 - B. Subsidiary Gōvardhana shrine
- XII Tirukkulasekharapuram : Kṛishṇa temple
 - A & B : image in *dēva-kōshṭha*
 - C. Dance-scene on banister of Gōvardhana shrine
- XIII Tirukkulasekharapuram : Kṛishṇa temple, close view of *adhishṭhāna* and wall
- XIV A. Thiruvanchikulam : Kīlataḷi Śiva temple, image of Gaṇapati
B. Kavur : Kaṇṇēśvara temple, image of Gaṇapati
- XV Trichur Museum : images from Kīlataḷi Śiva temple
 - A. Dakṣiṇāmūrti
 - B. Brāhmī
 - C. One of the Mātṛikās
- XVI Thiruvanchikulam : Kīlataḷi Śiva temple
 - A. General view
 - B. An image of Mātṛikā
 - C. Details of *praṇāla*
- XVII A. Tali : Śiva temple
B. Panniyur : Lakshminārāyaṇa temple, close view of *praṇāla* and *adhishṭhāna*
C. Ruined *garbha-griha*
- XVIII Tali : Śiva temple, close view of *bhitti*

- XIX A. Kodungalur : Bhagavatī temple
B. Triprangod : Kālasaṁhāramūrti temple
- XX A. Tiruvanchikulam : Śiva temple
B. Kandiur : Śiva temple
- XXI A. Tiruvannur : Śiva temple, close view of *adhishthāna* and wall
B. Trikkandiyur : Śiva temple, close view of *adhishthāna* and wall
- XXII A. Ramantali : Nārāyankaṇṇūr temple
B. Tricchambaram : Rājarājēśvara temple, view of wall and *adhishthāna*
- XXIII Ramantali : Nārāyankaṇṇūr temple
A. Image of Śāstā
B. Bālakrishṇa
- XXIV Eramam : Chālappuṇṇattu ambalam, image of Viṣṇu
- XXV Tricchambaram : Krishṇa temple
- XXVI Chalapuram : Kaṭṭilmāḍam
- XXVII Peruvanam : Śiva temple
A. Māḍattilappaṇ shrine
B. Iraṭṭayappaṇ shrine
- XXVIII Peruvanam : Śiva temple, close view of wall and *adhishthāna* of Māḍattilappaṇ shrine
- XXIX Peruvanam : Śiva temple
A. *Dvāra-pāla*
B. Wooden bracket figure of Iraṭṭayappaṇ shrine
C. Tricchambaram : Rājarājēśvara temple, *gaja-uyāla* as wooden bracket figure
- XXX A. Edapal : Sukapuram Dakṣiṇāmūrti temple
B. Maniyur : Subrahmaṇya temple
- XXXI Maniyur : Subrahmaṇya temple
A. Subrahmaṇya, stone and metal image
B. Śāstā
- XXXII A. Maniyur : Subrahmaṇya temple, *adhishthāna* and wall
B. Pullur : Koḍavalam Viṣṇu temple
- XXXIII A. Tirkakara : Vāmana-Mahāviṣṇu temple
B. Anantapuram : Anantapadmanābha temple
- XXXIV Anantapuram : Anantapadmanābha temple
A. Murals on sanctum-wall
B. Stucco figure of Viṣṇu
C. Vellanaḍ : Subrahmaṇya temple, image of Subrahmaṇya
- XXXV Trichur : Vaḍakkunnātha temple-complex
A. *Gōpura*
B. Shrines of Vaḍakkunnātha, and
C. Rāma
- XXXVI Trichur : Vaḍakkunnātha temple
A. *Kūttambalam*
B. Murals in *vaḷiambalam* depicting Vaikunṭhanātha and his consorts
- XXXVII A. Tirunillai : Śiva temple, inner shrine
B. Nemam : Nīramaṅkara temple

- XXXVIII Manjeri, Karikkad-kshetram
 A. Subrahmanya temple
 B. Inscribed *adhishthāna*
- XXXIX Trichur : Vaḍakkunnātha temple, *praṇāla* with *bhūta*-figure
 A. Vaḍakkunnātha shrine
 B. Rāma shrine
- XL A. Tripayar : Rāma temple, *adhishthāna* and *praṇāla* with *bhūta*-figure
 B. Tirunillai : Śiva temple, close view of inner shrine
- XLI A. Trivikramangalam : Viṣṇu temple, *dvāra-pāla*
 B. Kidangur : Subrahmanya temple, dance-scene on banister
 C. Nemam : Nīramaṅkara temple, image of Viṣṇu
- XLII Trivikramangalam : Viṣṇu temple, dance-scene on banister
- XLIII A. Trivikramangalam : Viṣṇu temple, dance-scene on banister
 B. Kizhavellur : Vāmana temple, carvings on banister
- XLIV A. Kizhavellur : Vāmana temple
 B. Punalur : Śrī Trikōṭēśvara temple
- XLV Punalur : Śrī Trikōṭēśvara temple
 A. *Adhishthāna*
 B. *Praṇāla*
 C. Carving on banister
- XLVI Nedumpura : Śiva temple
 A. General view
 B. Close view of *adhishthāna* and wall
- XLVII Quilon
 A. Gaṇapati temple
 B. Rāmēśvara temple, *adhishthāna* and *praṇāla*
 C. Carved banister
- XLVIII A. Nemam : Nīramaṅkara temple, image of Brāhmī
 B. Tenari : Subrahmanya temple, image of Subrahmanya
- XLIX Podiyal : Kṛishṇa temple
 A. Image of Viṣṇu
 B. Close view of *adhishthāna* and wall
- L A. Kozhikode : Tali temple
 B. Udayanapuram : Subrahmanya temple
- LI Kozhikode : Tali temple
 A. Reliefs of Sarasvatī
 B. Bhagavatī and Śiva
- LII A. Kozhikode : Tali temple, murals of Veṇūgōpāla
- LIHI A. Palliyurkavu : Śiva temple, murals depicting Umāsahita Śiva
 B. Kumblanad : Pallimanna Śiva temple, murals showing Rāma's coronation
- LIV A. Kumblanad : Pallimanna Śiva temple, murals depicting Śiva with Mōhinī
 B. Manambur : Subrahmanya temple, wood-carvings showing Śiva
- LV A. Manambur : Subrahmanya temple, wood-carvings of Anantaśāyī Viṣṇu
 B. Venganellur : Tiruvembilappan temple, wood-carvings on architrave of *valīambalam*
- LVI Chenganur : Narasiṁha temple

LIST OF PLATES

- A. Carved wooden wall above granite *adhishṭhāna*
 B. Wooden *dvāra-pāla*
- LVII Kaviyur : Śiva temple
 A & B : wood carvings on wall
- LVIII Kaviyur : Śiva temple
 A & B : wood carvings on wall
- LIX A. Vaikam : Śiva temple
 B. Tiruvillamala : Rāma temple, showing *praṇāla* with *bhūta*-figure
- LX Ettumanur : Mahādēva temple, murals depicting dancing Śiva on *gōpura* wall
- LXI A. Ettumanur : Mahādēva temple, details of granite *adhishṭhāna* and carved wooden wall
 B. Varkkalla : Janārdana temple, chauri-bearer
- LXII A. Aimanam : Pāṇḍava-Śāstā temple, murals
 B. Tiruvalattur : Bhagavati temple, *dvāra-pālikā*
 C. Payyanur : Subrahmaṇya temple
- LXIII A. Payyanur : Subrahmaṇya temple, details of wall
 B. Vaikam : Śiva temple
 C. Aduru : Mahālingēśvara temple
- LXIV A. Ettumanur : Mahādēva temple
 B. Suchindram : Sthāṇunāthasvāmī temple, *śikhara* of main shrine
- LXV Varkkalla : Janārdana temple, dancing Śiva
- LXVI Trivandrum Museum
 A. Viṣṇu and
 B. Bālakṛishṇa in bronze
- LXVII A. Trivandrum Museum: silver image of Śāstā
 B. Parappankod : Viṣṇu temple, ornamental rafter-shoe
- XLVIII A. Kalpathi : Viśvanātha temple, front view
 B. Tiruvallam : Paraśurāmēśvara temple
- LXIX Valaya-Udayadichchapuram : Valaya-Udayēśvaram temple
- LXX Tiruvattar : Ādikēśavaperumāḷ temple, covered *pradakṣhiṇā-patha*
- LXXI A. Tiruvattar : Ādikēśavaperumāḷ temple, carvings on pillar
 B. Suchindram : Sthāṇunāthasvāmī temple, Bhikṣhāṭana Śiva
 C. Harihara
- LXXII Tiruvattar : Ādikēśavaperumāḷ temple, carving on pillar
- LXXIII Tali : Śiva temple, District Trichur
- LXXIV Peruvanam : Māḍattilappaṇ shrine, District Trichur
- LXXV Maniyur : Subrahmaṇya temple, District Cannanore

PREFACE

The present monograph is the second in the series of the Architectural Survey of Temples published by the Archaeological Survey of India. As no worthwhile survey of the Kerala temples had been conducted, taking the entire Kerala coast as a whole, the present author was asked by the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, in 1968, to take up a systematic study of these temples. The actual survey was carried out between the years 1968 and 1971, the results of which have now been incorporated in this publication. A brief summary of the history of Kerala's temple-architecture has also been given in an earlier publication, *Monuments of Kerala* (New Delhi, 1973), published by the Archaeological Survey of India.

After the publication of the yearwise reports on the present survey in the various issues of the *Indian Archaeology—A Review*, scholars have shown renewed interest in the temples of Kerala: some monographs are now being prepared, and after the present volume was sent to the press a few studies on the subject have also come out in print. Unfortunately, all these studies centre round the architectural and sculptural aspects of temples, and those too, not based on any scientific sampling. The archaeological approach has so much appeal that we hardly make an effort to unravel the forces that led to the construction of a temple or the creation of legends and myths around it. An analytical study of the mythical accounts or the *sthala-purāṇas* of various temples is bound to reveal interactions of diverse social and economic forces.

The temple-institution seems to have played an important role in the community-formation and in evolving a scheme of social stratification. A temple being the pivot of a landed group, Kerala's agrarian system was naturally knit closely with the institution of temples, the practice of matriarchy and the law of primogeniture amongst the privileged groups. As the present survey was carried out as a part of the Archaeological Survey of India's programme of architectural survey of temples, all these aspects do not necessarily come within the scope of the present work. But it is hoped that future studies will make attempts at focusing more attention on these hidden strata of Kerala's past history.

The present survey does not claim any finality; as a matter of fact, it is just a beginning for taking up intensive studies on different aspects of the temples of Kerala. It is necessary here to record that the number of temples included for illustrating this book is only a few compared to that actually surveyed and documented since the intention was only to include the representative types from the historical and architectural point of view. Unpublished drawings and photographs of a good number of temples are available with the office of the Temple Survey Project (Southern Region), Madras, for reference of scholars for any future wider study on the subject. It is this office whose members of the staff, both technical and ministerial, extended full cooperation in making the present survey a fruitful one.

It was indeed a team-work in which every member played an important role. However, I want here to express my grateful thanks to some of the many people who helped

PREFACE

me in the field and in the office: to the Draftsmen Sarvashri A. T. P. Ponnuswamy, N. Selvapathy, M. S. R. K. Prasad and G. Krishnamurthy and to the Photographers Sarvashri K. S. Mani and M. Thyagarajan, all of the Temple Survey Project, Madras; to Shri M. S. Mani of the Headquarters Office for making the drawings ready for publication; to Shri S. K. Sundara Rajan, Stenographer, Temple Survey Project, Madras, for carrying out all typing work and his assistance in the field; and to Shri B. Narasimhaiah, Deputy Superintending Archaeologist, Headquarters, for the preparation of the exhaustive index.

H. SARKAR

AN ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF TEMPLES OF KERALA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

KERALA IS A LAND OF TEMPLES. AND TEMPLES HERE, IN A SENSE, WERE THE PIVOT OF religious, social, economic and cultural life of the Malayālam people. But not much attention has been paid to the legacy of its temple-architecture until the present author conducted a rapid survey of temples on the west coast between the years 1969 and 1971.¹ The present monograph attempts at summarizing the result of this reconnaissance, covering all the Districts. For the purpose of comparison, the survey was extended to the heart of Tuḷunāḍu as well. Though beset by many a difficulty, quite voluminous data have been collected; and indeed, there are innumerable temples each deserving a separate treatment of its own. None the less, an effort has been made to classify and periodize the available data with a view to presenting a picture of the evolution of Kerala's temple-architecture. In this process of analysis, many temples, well-known from religious or pilgrims' point of view, received lesser attention. Further, these are the temples where restrictions are too many, sometimes even making it difficult to have a close look of the interior, not to speak of preparation of drawings. Yet it must be recorded here that the present study achieved success because of the unstinted cooperation that individual priests offered in getting the measurements of the shrine-interior, an area still out of bounds for anybody except the concerned priest.

The present survey is practically a districtwise survey with emphasis on the former District of British Malabar, which was still then a *terra incognita* from the point of any architectural study. In a way, the former princely states of Travancore and Cochin have been served better: Kramrisch's survey of temples in the former Travancore state brings to the fore some of the basic facts of the 'Kerala style', which she prefers to distinguish from the Drāviḍa of the neighbouring Tamil country.² Strictly speaking, it is better to call the characteristic temples of Kerala as 'Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa', because these are fundamentally a regional variation of the Drāviḍa Order, and not a distinct class, but for the sake of

¹ *Indian Archaeology 1968-69—A Review*, pp. 86-89; 1969-70, pp. 78-83 and 1970-71, pp. 82-83.

² Stella Kramrisch, J. H. Cousins and R. Vasudeva Poduval, *The Arts and Crafts of Kerala* (Cochin, 1970), which is an enlarged edition of *The Arts and Crafts of Travancore*, published in 1948. Kramrisch's chapters have also been brought out separately in the form of a book entitled *Drāviḍa and Kerala in the Art of Travancore* (Ascona, 1953).

convenience and uniformity, the term 'Kerala' is also be used to denote this particular regional style of the Drāviḍa tradition. To revert to our main theme, a well-illustrated paper by Duraiswami Ayyengar, presented at the Ninth All-India Oriental Conference, is quite instructive, and offers for the first time a glimpse of the interior of a Kerala temple.¹ For Malabar, no such study is available except Logan's brief but invaluable notices of various shrines throughout the region.²

That Kerala's temples show a distinctive style was accepted by one and all from the very beginning. It is largely the local adaptation of the Drāviḍa or south Indian tradition, considerably influenced by various geographical factors like the high precipitation, the availability of laterite formation and dense jungles. How these factors contributed to the form and fabric of the temple-architecture of Kerala has been shown in Chapter III. Suffice it here to say that it differs from the main Drāviḍa tradition in having sloping roofs employed to combat heavy rainfall of the region. Profuse use of laterite in the wall-construction and timber in superstructure, and the high incidence of circular shrines are other distinguishing features of the style. Above all, in the interior arrangement, there are several marked variations not shared by the pure Drāviḍa tradition.

It was not merely geography but interaction of other factors like politics, culture and economy of the region that influenced greatly the evolution of Kerala's temple-architecture. The political revival of the Chēras in the ninth century, or even earlier, coupled with the impact of the *Bhakti* movement, provided a great fillip to the building of temples. And it goes without saying that such structural activity involving considerable expenditure was the result of economic prosperity arising out of the profitable external trade. Kerala had the unique advantage of producing spices, beryl and pearls which had a market in Europe and in the Far Eastern countries. The Romans or their intermediaries had dominated the trade in the early centuries of the Christian era, the vivid description of which is preserved not only in the *Periplus* and Ptolemy but also in the Śaṅgam literature of the time. A Śaṅgam poet refers to the pepper trade of Muziris, the principal port of the west coast, and the presence of foreign ships there laden with gold to be exchanged with the cargoes of pepper.³ In subsequent times it had also established trade-relation successively with China, Arabia, and Europe. The wealth of Kerala in later times depended mainly on her spice-trade, supplemented by cashew and the systematic cultivation of coconut, both the items being introduced or popularized, as the case may be, by the Portuguese. It was the surplus wealth derived from various external trade that contributed greatly to the growth of the temple-architecture and, as a corollary, a strong theocratic nucleus in each principality.

Politically, Kerala hardly ever remained united, except for a short while, when the Chēra monarch Kōdai Ravivarmaṇ brought the entire Kerala under one sceptre.

¹ M. S. Duraiswami Ayyengar, 'The Architecture of Travancore Temples', *Proceedings and Transactions of the Ninth All-India Oriental Conference, Trivandrum* (Trivandrum, 1940), pp. 1102-1104.

² W. Logan, *Malabar*, in 2 volumes (Madras, 1951).

³ *Ahanānūru*, 149.

But it was certainly not based on the principle of annexation, an idea perhaps unknown in ancient Indian history, but on the mere acknowledgement of one's supremacy. Prior to this event, three major kingdoms extended their influences over the neighbouring regions, thereby giving rise to three epicentres. These three powers were: the Āys of Viliṅgam in the south, the Chēras or Kulāśēkharas of Mahōdayapuram in central Kerala and the Mūshikas of Kolam over the north. Almost similar triarchy is to be seen in the Śaṅgam age when the Āys, the Chēras and the Naṇṇaṅs of Eḷiṃmalai had risen to power. Before the arrival of the Portuguese on Indian waters, once again the three rulers—the Vēṇāḍu rulers in the south, the Zamorin in the central part, with Calicut as the main commercial centre, and Kōlatīri Rājās, the descendants of the Mūshikas, in the north—emerged steadily out of the multitudes of petty chieftains, as the powers guiding the course of Kerala's political and economic destiny. Still, most of the time, it was the phenomenon of political fragmentation that reigned supreme in the polity of Kerala. This very factor introduced a unifying trend in the pattern of Kerala's temple-architecture, for in the absence of any strong dynastic influence the form of architecture was bound to be guided largely by the codified principles of the *Vāstu-śāstras* and the *sthapatis*. At the same time, it was not a development in complete isolation. Trends and features of the neighbouring styles must have influenced the development of Kerala temples, but those were the cases of assimilation at the behest of architects in the general matrix of indigenous style rather than dynastic predilection. On the whole, despite minor variations the temple-architecture of Kerala presents a uniform level of achievement, and reflects more or less a common doctrinal approach and rituals.

It is not easy to lay bare the divergent architectural strains that converged to give rise to Kerala's characteristic temple-form. Furthermore, the nebulous political history of the early phase and some sort of historical isolation have made the story of its architecture devoid of true perspective. Nevertheless, a few such features which seem to have been imbibed from the neighbouring styles are described in Chapter III. It appears that certain architectural trends drifted to Kerala in the trail of some migration or contact. To cite an instance, the circular plan of the temple was probably introduced by a people who came from the Gaṅgā valley (below, p. 70). Doubtless it is just a hypothesis based on the tradition of the migration of the Nambūdiri Brāhmins to Kerala.¹ Nor it is based on solid temporal

¹ One three-eyed Trilochana Pallava is said to have brought some Brāhmaṇas from Ahichchhatra and settled them to the east of Śrīparvata where he set up seventy *agrahāras*. See *Annual Report of Epigraphy, 1908*, pp. 82-83. Some later Kadamba inscriptions attribute this emigration to Mayuraśarmaṇ who was undoubtedly a Brāhmaṇa. A record of the Hangal Kadambas says that Mayuraśarmaṇ came from the Himalayan regions and brought from Ahichchhatra eighteen Brāhmaṇas whom he established at Kuntala. All this tradition may suggest that a migration of Brāhmaṇas took place in Tuḷunāḍu, and then to Kerala, from the Kadamba country. It is said that the Brāhmaṇas were established in sixty-four *grāmas*—32 each in Tuḷunāḍu and Kerala. Some Brāhmaṇas must have reached the west coast through gradual expansion by way of 'breaking up of families'. Logan records a tradition that Paraśurāma first of all brought a poor Brāhmaṇa from the bank of the Kṛishṇā, and the eldest of his eight sons was made the head of the Brāhmaṇas in Kerala. Other Brāhmaṇas were brought subsequently and settled in sixty-four villages. See Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

sequence, because the circular temples of the north are not firmly dated. But their occurrence shows the persistence of a tradition; moreover, it is a tradition preserved in an early text like the *Bṛihat-Saṁhitā* of the sixth century.¹ The circular plan underwent several modifications when a population from Śrī Laṅkā, having an intimate knowledge of the architectural development of the Buddhist circular shrines (*Vaṭadāge*), settled down in Kerala (below, p. 71).

Geographically and culturally, Kerala and other parts of south India were not far removed from Śrī Laṅkā wherefrom certain ideas and practices flowed back. Buddhism seems to have come to the west coast from that direction since the plastic tradition of Buddha images of Kerala bear imprints of the Anuradhapura style (below, p. 50). Another point of similarity is the occurrence of rock-shelters in both the regions from a very early period, their distribution suggesting a common horizon. Śrī Laṅkā, more often than not, was drawn in the political cross-currents of the history of south India, specially during the heyday of the Pāṇḍyas and the Chōḷas. Now, one of the supposed landmarks in the history of the Chēras is the synchronism of the Ceylonese monarch Gajabāhu, who is generally identified with Gajabāhu I (173-95), with Śeṅguṭṭuvaṇ, the Chēra monarch and the central figure of the *Śilappadikāram*; the former is said to have attended the consecration ceremony of the temple, built in honour of Kaṇṇagi at the Chēra capital.²

It is often believed that the architecture of Nepal and other Himalayan regions is similar to that of Kerala. Likewise, it is compared with the architecture of various Far Eastern countries. But it has to be borne in mind, before suggesting any common link, that an area of heavy rainfall or snow will naturally develop sloping roofs; further, there are certain inherent patterns in timber-constructions which give rise to similar external forms and features. Truly speaking, a closer examination is likely to disclose many divergences between the architectural style of Kerala, basically a south Indian tradition, and that of a Far Eastern country or a Himalayan region. A recent study on the method of roof-construction in different parts of South-East Asia has brought out wide disparities between Kerala and other areas.³ So far as the construction of walls and entablature are concerned

These traditions indicate that Brāhmaṇas from different parts of India migrated or were brought to the west coast in different periods of history in the usual course of gradual expansion in search of new places and homes.

¹ Of the twenty types of temple, enumerated in the *prāsādā-lakṣaṇ-ādhyāya*, śloka 17-31 of the *Bṛihat-Saṁhitā*, *vṛitta*, *samudga*, *vṛiṣa*, *ghaṭa* and also possibly *padma* are circular shrines. The description refers more to the shape of a particular plan than to its superstructure.

² The synchronism occurs in the *Śilappadikāram* and not in any *Śaṅgam* anthology. According to K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, 'And the merit of the Gajabāhu synchronism lies in its fitting in so exactly with the date gathered from the classical authors, the Tamil poems, and the coin-finds'. See his *A Comprehensive History of India*, II (The Mauryas and Śātavāhanas) (Calcutta, 1957), p. 516. He also says that he was the only Gajabāhu known in Ceylonese chronicles before the twelfth century A.D. 'As for the *Śilappadikāram*, in its extant form it certainly belongs to an age much later than that of the *Śaṅgam*, but there is reason to hold that this work too preserves the elements of a correct tradition for its historical setting.' See, *ibid.*, p. 514.

³ J. Dumarçay, 'Les charpentes rayonnantes sur plan barlong ou carré de l'Asie méridionale', *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, tome LX (Paris, 1973), pp. 85-104.

they are typically south Indian. Multiple-roof, in the sense the term has been used in the history of the Nepalese or South-East Asian architecture, was never in vogue in Kerala, where the number of roofs is rarely three and generally only two. Nor was the idea of multi-terraced base ever popular in the temple-architecture of the west coast. In spite of all this, certain basic similarities are likely to exist, specially in the *sāndhāra* arrangement, between Kerala and the distant Nepal, as both the areas may have inherited some traits from a common source.

It is noteworthy that the induction of *sāndhāra* construction in the temple-architecture of India is not simply the outcome of the concept of *pradakṣiṇā*. In all probability, similar constructional features were current in the domestic architecture throughout India; actually, it is still of common occurrence in the thatched or tiled houses. In Kerala today, all the double-storeyed houses, with tiled roofs, are made of identical plan: two side rooms and two verandahs of such a house, taken as a whole, constitute the processional path of a *sāndhāra* temple. As it is a widespread feature, its introduction in the temple-architecture—perhaps it made its first appearance in the Gupta temples—in different regional styles may be taken as the usual development. Alternatively, it could have disseminated to different parts of India also from the Gupta tradition.

The idea of *nālabalam* in the temples of Kerala, which may be distantly related to the quadrangular monastery or house with a central courtyard, is comparable to that of the *nālukattu* ('four buildings') or the traditional domestic houses consisting of four rooms arranged around the central courtyard. Some of the individual buildings in the Padmanabhapuram palace-complex follow an identical plan. Even the plan of the Mattancheri palace at Cochin is no exception to the general rule, notwithstanding the fact that it was built by the Portuguese and renovated by the Dutch.

Kerala has produced a few *Vāstu-śāstras* like the *Tantrasamuchchaya*¹ written by Nārāyaṇa (born in 1426) and the *Śilparatna*² by Śrī Kumāra, the latter datable to the sixteenth century. Both these treatises are meant for temple-architecture and must have been written based on earlier traditions. But the *Manusyaśāstrachandrikā*,³ also of the sixteenth century, is devoted exclusively to domestic architecture. For compiling it, the author has drawn heavily from the *Tantrasamuchchaya*, which deals elaborately on the construction and disposition of rafters (*lupās*) etc. of the wooden ceiling and roofs. It is worth-noting that these texts were written or compiled during the last phase of Kerala's temple-architecture when, thanks to the favourable commercial intercourse with the European world, there was a spurt in the building of temples. As these texts embody many older traditions, they are of immense help in understanding the architecture of the early phases too. In many

¹ N. V. Mallayya, *Studies in Sanskrit Texts on Temple Architecture with special reference to Tantrasamuchchaya* (Annamalainagar, 1949).

² T. Ganapati Sastri (ed.), *The Śilparatna* by Śrī Kumāra, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, LXXV (Trivandrum, 1922).

³ T. Ganapati Sastri (ed.), *The Manusyaśāstrachandrikā*, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, LVI (Trivandrum, 1917).

respects, they represent the standardized versions of the then existing or pre-existing practices and rituals.

The temple-architecture of Kerala, as will be evident from the subsequent chapters, has been divided into three phases—Early (800–1000), Middle (1001–1301) and Late (1301–1800). Each phase discloses certain architectural evolution, with simpler layout becoming progressively more and more elaborate and pompous. In the Early phase, the architecture was the sole attraction, as the sculptural contents were few and far between. But in the Late phase, with the incorporation of other forms of visual arts like wood-carvings and paintings on temple walls, a balance has been forged between Kerala's architecture and decorative art. It was, in the main, a period of wooden architecture and wood-sculptures; forms in murals, stone and metal sculptures are indeed virtual imitations of their wooden prototypes. All the wood-sculptures have been carved with consummate skill and patience, portraying scenes from the epics and the *Purāṇas* without reflecting any sectarian bias. It was a period of great literary movement born out of a new *Bhakti* cult, and there are enough material—archaeological and literary—to reconstruct the picture of the Late phase. But the history of the Early phase is still in mist though an attempt has been made to give a reasonable outline on the basis of existing temples retaining some of their pristine features.

As stated above, the archaeological evidence—inscriptional and monumental—takes us back to the early years of the ninth century for the beginning of the temple-architecture, while the history of the stone-sculptures begins at least from the eighth, the period of rock-architecture and Buddhism in Kerala. Does that mean that Kerala did not have any image or a temple prior to this time? It is hard to believe that a people referred to in Aśoka's rock-edict failed to develop a religious outlook or monumental form of religious edifices until the eighth century. Further, the Chēras occupy a prominent position in the early Śaṅgam literature; but there is no reference there which may be taken as an unquestionable proof of the existence of an architectural tradition of the time. Still it is possible to sift some material, at least to revive the picture of the religious conditions on the basis of the *Paṭṭirup̄patt̄i* ('Ten tens'), an anthology of hundred verses sung in praise of the Chēra monarchs, and the various *paṭigams* or epilogues appended to the poems in subsequent times. It will not be out of place to dwell at some length about the religious condition of the Chēra country in the Śaṅgam and post-Śaṅgam times, for that will indicate that the temples of Kerala had a still longer history though in the present state of our knowledge we are unable to go beyond the eighth century.

Undeniably, the Śaṅgam age was a period when Vedic religion of sacrifice penetrated into the Chēra country. For that matter, this was true also for other kingdoms of the south, since *Puranānūru* refers to individual Brāhmaṇas worshipping the three sacred fires in their houses daily.¹ Sacrifices were made not only for gods but also for guests, and there are evidences to show that several Chēra rulers like Palyānai Śelkeḷu-kuṭṭuvaṇ, Tagdūr-eṇṇinda

¹ *Puranānūru*, 15:16-21; 2:22-23; and 367:12-13. It is a collection of four hundred lyrics composed by about one hundred and sixty poets.

INTRODUCTION

Peruñjēral Irumpoṟai and Śelvakkaḍuṅḡō Vāḷi Āḍaṇ performed Vedic sacrifices.¹ Many Chēra kings, including those who participated in Vedic sacrifices, extended at the same time their patronage to the worship of gods, and accompanying practices like fasting and other devotional aspects. Among the deities worshipped were Viṣṇu, Skanda or Subrahmaṇya and Koṟṟavai, the south Indian counterpart of Durgā.² Also prevalent were the legends related to Tripura-saṁhāra by Śiva and Sūrapadma-saṁhāra by Subrahmaṇya (31: 18-30). In one instance, the victory of Imaṇavarambaṇ Neḍuñjēral Āḍaṇ, the son of Udiyañjēral, over the enemy with the emblem of the Kaḍambu tree has been compared with Subrahmaṇya's victory over Sūrapadma (11:3-6 and 1-14). This king is said to have made rich donations to temples and had the glow of Viṣṇu. His younger brother, Palyānai Śelkelukuṭṭuvaṇ was at the beginning a worshipper of Koṟṟavai but later turned into an ascetic following the Brāhmaṇical practices. The fourth decad of the *Paḍirruppattu*, devoted to the exploits of Kaḷaṅgayakkaṇṇi Nārmuḍichchēral, the son of Imaṇavarambaṇ, refers to a shrine of Viṣṇu and also to the practices of worshipping the deity by *tulasī* garland and devotional fasting, besides alluding to the legend of the burning of Tripura (31: 7-9 and 18-20). It is thus evident that there were shrines in the Chēra country but it is difficult to visualize their structural form. The possibility of the existence of open-air shrines can hardly be excluded, and in all likelihood, the shrine for Koṟṟavai, the Goddess of Victory, was of a similar nature. Even today there are numerous Bhagavatī shrines in Kerala in the form of roofless temples; in many instances, a stone placed below a tree represents Bhagavatī.

It is obvious that the early Chēras thrived in a period of mixed religious practices but the status of Koṟṟavai, the traditional Goddess of Victory, remained supreme throughout the period. Significantly, in the Śaṅgam literature the references to Buddhism and Jainism are only few although there are definite proofs to show that Jainism gained foothold in the ancient Chēra country as early as the second century A.D. (below, p. 41). It is well-known that Ilaṅgo-Adigaḷ, the author of the *Śilappadikāram* was a Chēra prince who embraced Jainism. According to this work, Śeṅguṭṭuvaṇ, a hero of the epic, has been credited with the establishment of the Pattini cult. His northern conquest was directed mainly to obtain the stone on which divine Pattini was to be made.³ Some authorities take Pattini as the Jaina goddess Padmāvatī-dēvī,⁴ and to this idea was commingled the episode of Kaṇṇagi to give birth to a cult which is just a variant of the widespread practice of Bhagavatī worship. In the actual poem on Śeṅguṭṭuvaṇ by Paraṇar in the fifth decad of the *Paḍirruppattu*, the king's exploits regarding the installation of Pattini image do not find any mention. It was in the *paḍigam* that one sees the first reference to the institution of the

¹ *Paḍirruppattu*, third *paḍigam*: 74:1-2; 70:17-22 and seventh *paḍigam*: 6-7.

² *Ibid.*, Viṣṇu in 15:39-40; 31:1-10; seventh *paḍigam*: 8-9; Skanda and Subrahmaṇya in 11:1-14; Koṟṟavai in third *paḍigam*: 7-8; 79:17-18; 88:11-12; 90: 19, and these references are worded as 'worshipped the Ayirai hill' or 'worshipped the goddess of the Ayirai hill'.

³ *Śilappadikāram*, chapters xxvi and xxvii.

⁴ Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History* (Kottayam, 1970), p 112.

Pattini cult, which was later transformed into a legend of great consequence by the author of the *Śilappadikāram*, a work of the post-Śaṅgam age.

References to Brāhmaṇical temples, and Jaina and Buddhist establishments are quite clear in the post-Śaṅgam literature. For example, the *Śilappadikāram* alludes to Śeṅguṭṭuvaṇ's visit to the shrine of his tutelary deity Śiva at Vaṇji on the eve of his departure for the alleged northern conquest (xxvi, 11. 54-57); there was also a Viṣṇu temple at Vaṇji very close to the latter. Viṣṇu has been described there as 'the God who is in conscious sleep' housed in a golden hall or temple: the god may well be identified with the Anantaśāyī form of Viṣṇu (xxvi, 11.61-63). It is also recorded that the temple of Pattini Dēvī was constructed by men well-versed in the art of temple-architecture (xxviii, 222-25). These are clear references to the existence of temples but to utilize these information in a definite time-context is fraught with difficulties, as the date of the epic is a subject of controversy; equally controversial is the date of the *Maṇimekalai*, a Buddhist work by Śāttanar.¹ Evidently, literature does not help much in arriving at the date of the beginning of the temple-architecture in Kerala or the Chēra country. This is, of course, true for the whole of Tamil Nadu where there are no temples, either rock-cut or structural, that may be dated before the sixth century A.D. Admittedly, it was the *Bhakti* movement which created a religious ferment in the south from the sixth to the ninth centuries; and building temples, in durable media, is the material expression of this devotional upsurge, unique in the annals of south India.

That south India in the sixth century had developed its own style, distinct from the northern tradition, is beyond any doubt. This was the time of efflorescence of various regional schools throughout India; and of all the regions, Drāviḍadēśa witnessed the most spectacular growth in this direction. No less an authority than Varāhamihira recognizes the very fact when he states in the *Bṛihat-Saṃhitā* (lviii: śloka 4) that *Nagnajitā tu chaturdaśa dāirghyaṇa Drāviḍam kathitam*, thereby pointing to the existence of a distinctive Drāviḍa tradition of art in his time. Even the manner in which references to Maya has been cited in the *Bṛihat-Saṃhitā* indicates an architectural tradition independent of the north. So far as the prevalence of the plastic art was concerned, most of the images were in clay or stucco; in reality, the stucco tradition continued in Tamiḷnāḍu, Kerala and Tuḷunāḍu for a very long time. Prior to the eighth century, the art of Kerala was possibly confined to the media of clay and stucco, while aniconic form of deities and various animistic practices must also have been in vogue side by side. In Tuḷunāḍu, one comes across various Bhūtasthānas in the form of unpretentious structures containing folk images in metal, wood or terracotta,

¹ Two epics have been dated variously by different authors from the second to the ninth centuries. It is, however, more appropriate to place them, on the basis of a broad picture of society that they paint, in the post-Śaṅgam age when Buddhism, Jainism and Brāhmaṇism coexisted side by side. It is significant to note that both the poetic works had no idea of the *Bhakti* movement, nor do they mention any rising powers of the sixth century like the Pallavas. Perhaps the main story antedates considerably the period of compilation, which may be the eighth century.

INTRODUCTION

in human shape or resembling various animals. Perhaps a similar picture can be projected back to understand the religion, art and architecture of far south including Kerala, before the sixth century. Of course, Vedic religion, Buddhism and Jainism, too, had their limited roles to play in the cultural and religious life in the south.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND

1. GEOGRAPHICAL

Kerala's landscape has a distinctive individuality. Abundant waterways that traverse the country, uninterrupted chain of hills with impenetrable forests, heavy rainfall on account of the direct strike of the south-west monsoon, and a long coast line with creeks and backwaters are bound to cast their spell, directly or indirectly, not only on the people but also on various expressions of art, culture and history. But Kerala is just a narrow strip of land, not more than 555 km in length, on the western seaboard, roughly between the latitudes 8°17' N and 12°47' N. Juxtaposed between the Arabian sea on the west and the hill ranges of the Western Ghats on the east, its maximum width is only about 120 km. Geographically its length covers most of the Malabar coast, with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka forming its two neighbouring states. Though small in extent, the state has been divided, for administrative convenience, into eleven districts like Trivandrum, Quilon, Alleppey, Kottayam, Idikki, Ernakulam, Trichur, Palghat, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Cannanore, the last four districts once constituting the British Malabar of the Madras Presidency. The Laccadive and Minicoy islands, renamed as Lakshadweep, which are mostly composed of coral sand, form at present a Union Territory.

Kerala, the home of the Malayālam people and the language, the latter belonging to a Dravidian family, was known variously as Kēraḷa, the land of the Chēras, Malanāḍu and Malabar. The second rock-edict of Aśoka (c. 273-32 B.C.) refers to Keralaputras along with the Chōḷas, Pāṇḍyas and Satiyaputras as the border kingdoms of the Maurya empire.¹ If the identification of the river Chūrṇī, mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra*, with the Periyār is correct, one has to accept that the region was known also to Kauṭilya.² The river Chūrṇī has been mentioned because of its association with the pearl; even the unknown author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* mentions about the export of pearls from the ports of Kerala like Muziris or Muyirikota, generally identified with Cranganur.³ The other three important ports on the Kerala coast are Naura (Cannanore), Tyndis (Ponnani)

¹ The Girnar version mentions *Choḍā-Pādā-Satiyaputo-Ketalaputo*, the last mentioned name evidently a mistaken form of *Keralaputo*. The Mansehra version, however, clearly states *Keralaputra*, while Kalsi and Shahbazgarhi refer it respectively as *Kelaputo* and *Keradaputro*. See D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, I (Calcutta, 1964), p. 18. The thirteenth rock-edict refers to *Choḍa-pāṇḍa* but not to *Keralaputra*.

² Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, ed. by R. Shamasastri (Mysore, 1961), p. 76.

³ *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, English translation by Wilfred H. Schoff (New York, 1912).

and Nelcynda¹ (near Kottayam).¹ The *Periplus* mentions Kerala as Carobothra, while Pliny, the Roman historian of the first century, calls it Caelobothras.² All these names, including the one used by Ptolemy,³ the geographer of the second century, sound more or less identical. In contemporary Tamil literature, it is invariably referred to as the Chēra country. However, to the medieval Tamil authors it was Malanādu ('land of hills'); Malabar or Melibar, the latter was used by Marco Polo (c. A.D. 1293),⁴ is perhaps derived from *Mala* or Malanādu. In fact, Cosmas Indicopleustes⁵ in the first half of the sixth century, as well as the Arab navigators have just used *Male* to denote Kerala. Some authorities take the suffix *bar* as the Persian *bar*, meaning a country.⁶ Now the word Malayālam is popularly taken as a compound of *Mala* ('hill') and *ālam* ('depth')⁷. Truly, Kerala is a land of hills and waters.

Broadly speaking, Kerala has three physiographic divisions: the alluvial littoral; plains with extensive laterite outcrops; and uplands of granite-gneiss and charnockite. It is proposed to discuss the salient features and their contribution to history and culture of

¹ Paragraph 54 of the *Periplus* says as follows: 'Tyndis is of the Kingdom of Cerobothra; it is a village in plain sight by the sea. Muziris, of the same Kingdom, abounds in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia, and even by the Greeks; it is located on a river, distant from Tyndis by river and sea five hundred stadia, and up the river from the shore twenty stadia. Nelcynda is distant from Muziris by river and sea, about five hundred stadia, and is of another Kingdom, the Pandian'. *Ibid.*, p. 44. Paragraph 55 gives the name of another port on the west coast as follows: 'There is another place at the mouth of this river, the village Bacare; to which ships drop down on the outward voyage from Nelcynda, and anchor in the roadstead to take on their cargoes; because the river is full of shoals, and the channels are not clear'. Schoff identifies Bacare with Porakad (9° 22' N; 76° 22' E). *Op. cit.*, p. 211.

² J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature* (Westminster, 1901), pp. 111-12.

³ Surendranath Majumdar Sastri, *McCrindle's Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy* (Calcutta, 1927), p. 50.

⁴ Henri Cordier, *Ser Marco Polo* (London 1920), p. 80.

⁵ J. W. McCrindle, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas Indicopleustes* (London, 1897), p. 119. 'In the country called *Male*, where the pepper grows, there is also a church, and at another place called Calliana there is moreover a bishop, who is appointed from Persia.'

⁶ Caldwell writes, 'Dr. Gundert suggested to me the possibility of the derivation of *bar* from the Arabic *barr*, continent, as he considered it probable that the name of Malabar had first been brought into use by the Arabian navigators. Colonel Yule arrived independently at a similar conclusion. He preferred, however, the Persian *bār* to the Arabic *bārr*, and has given illustrations of the use of this Persian affix by the Arabs, which appear to me to carry conviction.' See Robert Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (Madras, 1956), p. 24. In the so-called Cairo Geniza, Malabar has been spelt in four different ways: Minabar, Manibar, Malibar and Malibarat. At in the last mentioned name is the Arabic plural feminine. See S. D. Geitein, 'Arabic documents on the trade between India and the Mediterranean countries', in *Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, 1964*, volume IV (Poona, 1970), pp. 251-256.

⁷ According to Caldwell, 'The second part of the word, *ālam* or *ārma*, is an abstract neuter noun, between *mala* and which *y* is inserted by rule to prevent hiatus, *ālam* is plainly a verbal derivative from the root *āl* "to possess", "to use", "to rule", not to be confounded with *āram* "depth", from the root *ār* "to the deep". He says further that, 'Perhaps the best rendering of the term Malayālam or Malayārama is the "mountain region". See Robert Caldwell, *op. cit.*, Madras (1956), pp. 16-17.

each of these zones one by one. As is well-known, the sources of granite and charnockite are the Western Ghats, and these materials were exploited by the authors of Kerala's rock-architecture. Needless to say, the Western Ghats or the Sahyadri Ranges are the most conspicuous feature of the west coast. But there are several gaps in the Ranges which have made it possible to maintain contacts with the people on either side of the Ghats. Of the gaps, the most remarkable is the Palghat Gap to the south of the Nilgiri hills, providing the main arterial rail and road communication between Kerala and its two neighbouring states. Rising to an average elevation of 304·80 m, the gap extends to a width of about 24·14 km, and perhaps it represents the valley of a westerly flowing river of the Tertiary times.¹ The early history of the Chēras had, therefore, a vast geographical horizon extending on either side of the Gap; as a matter of fact, one of their branches, if not the main line of rulers, had been ruling over the Kōngu country (present Salem and Coimbatore Districts). Towards further south, there are some passes of which Aramboli Pass near Nagercoil, District Kanyakumari, played vital roles in times of war and peace. Many Pāṇḍya and Chōḷa invasions took the very route, traversed also by traders, religious teachers and artists.

But Kerala's long coast-line, without strong littoral currents, offered opportunities for many a maritime people from Europe, Arab peninsula and China to establish trade-relations with the region, famous for spices like pepper, cardamom, ginger and cinnamon. The earliest contact of Kerala, leaving aside its hypothetical relation with Sumer, Egypt, Babylon and Phoenicia,² was with the Roman world, as vividly portrayed in the Śaṅgam literature and in the writing of the Roman historians. Furthermore, there are definite numismatic evidence to show that the Roman trade with Kerala was a brisk one and to the advantage of the Chēra country. It appears that this commercial intercourse started even before the rise of the first Chēra dynasty, for Kottayam, Eyyal and other places on the west coast yielded hoards of Roman coins belonging to the first century A.D.³ Yet a noteworthy feature of this distribution of the Roman coins is their concentration in the Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu, then forming a part of the ancient Kōngu country, which was held by the Chēras from a very remote past. Most of these clusters of coins belong to the first century A.D. and all this establishes beyond doubt the intimate trade-contact between the Roman empire and the present Coimbatore region, noted for ancient beryl

¹ M. S. Krishnan, *Geology of India and Burma* (Madras, 1956), p. 5.

² Caldwell in his above-cited book (pp. 88-90) refers to words like *tuki* or peacock, occurring in the Hebrew text of the Books of Kings and Chronicles, as originating from the Dravidian *tōkei*. Further, the Hebrew word *ahalim* or *ahaloth* and the Greek word *Oryza*, rice, are said to have been derived from the Dravidian *aghi* and *arisi* respectively. On the basis of such philological similarities, attempts have been made by various scholars to establish Kerala's contact with Greece, Phoenicia etc., but these are too tenuous a thread to stand any critical examination. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, in his *History of Tamil Language and Literature* (Madras, 1956), pp. 8-10, has shown that etymology and correlation given by Caldwell for various such words are highly doubtful.

³ Cf. the list and the map showing the distribution of Roman coins in India published as an appendix to the report on excavation at Arikamedu, in *Ancient India*, no 2, (1946), pp. 116-121.

mines. This brings us to the vexed problem of the identification of Vañji or Karūr of the early Śaṅgam literature, and the Muziris of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy.

The evidences of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy affirm the importance which Muziris enjoyed in Kerala's trade with the Roman world. Undeniably it was situated on the west coast though it may be doubted if it was the present Cranganur in District Trichur. Some geographical change must have taken place in the region when the unprecedented flood in the Periyar river in 1341 forced it to meet the sea opposite Ernakulam, thus giving birth to the Cochin harbour.¹ It is a geographical incident of far-reaching consequences but that need not detain us here. The fact is that the Chēra port of Muziris has to be placed somewhere in the west coast, near the ancient mouth of the Periyar. But the location of the Chēra capital Vañji *alias* Karūr is not that easy. There is absolutely no unanimity among scholars about its location though according to Ptolemy it was an inland town. Generally it is identified variously with Thiruvanchikulam or Karurapadna, near Cranganur, on the west coast and Karur in District Tiruchchirappalli, Tamil Nadu.² Recent excavations in the Cranganur area show that the cultural deposits there do not go back beyond the ninth century.³ In the circumstances, it is difficult to accept the identification of ancient Vañji with some place near Cranganur or Thiruvanchikulam, unless it is proved that the flood in the Periyar river topsy-turveyed all proofs of an earlier settlement there. So far as the present evidence goes, Karūr, in District Tiruchchirappalli, has a better claim over others in being considered as the ancient Vañji. It is worth-noting that the only archaeological evidence of the early Chēras comes from a rock-shelter at Pugaḷūr, near Karūr. Associated with two Chēra inscriptions of about the second century A.D.,⁴ Karur itself, as the place-name, is mentioned in a short inscription on a bed in one of the rock-shelters there; this inscription is also dated to the second century.⁵ A later inscription, dated in the thirteenth regnal year of Kulōttuṅga Chōḷa, in the Agniśvara temple at Nerur, about 9 km from present Karur, mentions Karuvūr *alias* Vañjimānagar in Veṅgala-nāḍu, a subdivision of Viraśōḷamaṇḍalam.⁶ Moreover, Karur has produced no less than six hoards of Roman coins ranging in dates from A.D. 37 to 180.⁷ It is not unlikely, therefore, that the political

¹ K. M. Panikker, *A History of Kerala* (Annamalainagar, 1960), p. 8.

² Some authorities like K. G. Sessa Iyer in his *Cēra Kings of the Śaṅgam Period* (London, 1937), and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar in his *Seran Vañji* (Ernakulam, 1940) have made an attempt to identify original Vañji with Thiruvanchikulam, near Cranganur. Elamkulam P. Kunjan Pillai in *Studies in Kerala History* (Kottayam, 1970), pp. 156-57, says that 'There is no evidence to prove, that Tiruvanchikulam had the name Karuvūr'. The name is a late modification of Anchaikalam.

³ *India Archaeology 1969-70—A Review*, pp. 14-15.

⁴ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1927-28* (Madras, 1929), nos. 341-49 and p. 50; *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1963-64* (Delhi, 1967), nos. 296-97 and pp. 28-29; Iravatham Mahadevan, 'Corpus of the Tamil-Brahmi Inscriptions,' in the *Seminar on Inscriptions 1966*, ed. by R. Nagaswamy (Madras 1968), pp. 65-67; and K. G. Krishnan, 'Cera kings of the Pugalur inscriptions', in *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, IV (1970-71), pp. 136-43.

⁵ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1927-28*, no. 343.

⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 335.

⁷ *Ancient India*, no. 2 (1946), pp. 118-119.

horizon of the Chēras of the Śaṅgam age extended from the west coast to the interior of Koṅgu-nāḍu, the latter comprising the present Districts of Coimbatore and Salem.

According to the *Periplus*, the items of exports from Muziris or Musiri of the Tamil poets, comprised pearl, pepper and different varieties of gems, whereas imports included coral, lead, tin and stibium. Almost similar products were handled, by way of exports and imports, in the other ports like Naura, Tyndis and Nelcynda. It is also well-known that in the maritime trade with China, Quilon was the port of call for every Chinese ship carrying cargoes between the west and China; there were direct sailings also between China and the west coast.¹ Before the advent of the Portuguese on Indian waters, the Arabs monopolized the spice-trade with Kerala, and in course of time, Calicut rose to prominence as its most important port. How far the inland waterways were utilized by various foreign traders is not known though it is certain that minor ports, commercial settlements and emporiums came up at the mouths of the rivers and backwaters. This geographical factor was exploited to the maximum extent by the European traders who made use of the easiest and cheapest means of water-communications. They settled mostly at the mouths of the waterways, and had their factories, and even forts, at such vital strategic points.

It is obvious that the long coast-line, punctuated by innumerable creeks and estuaries, offered great trading facilities to different maritime and commercial nations of the world. Hence, the sea was not a barrier but an accelerating factor for various maritime intercourses. Similarly, the passes across the Western Ghats, and the direct coastal link with Tuḷunāḍu should have served as easy roads of contacts with the rest of India. There are several instances to show that cultural and religious movements on the one hand and artistic and architectural trends on the other from different directions had diffused slowly and steadily to Kerala. One of the greatest sons of Kerala, Śaṅkarācharya, preached his new Advaita philosophy to different parts of India without any impediment. In the circumstances, it is difficult to see how geography could impose cultural isolation on Kerala with the rest of the world. Perhaps such isolation is latent in the social and economic life of the people belonging to the different parts of India. Sedentary habits that they developed due to various reasons stood on the way of social and cultural mobility, which in turn imparted a sense, rather an illusion, of isolation.

For the purpose of the study of archaeological remains, the laterite zone, however, is the most important of the three, because all the early vestiges of Kerala's history are scattered here. These archaeological remains comprise megalithic monuments like rock-cut tombs, sunk mostly in laterite bed-rocks, *kuḍai-kal* or 'hood-stones', *topi-kal* or 'hat-stone', dolmenoid cists, menhirs and so on.² These are made out of laterite and ascribable to the period couple of centuries before and after the Christ. The occurrence of megalithic

¹ For references to Quilon (Caoulam, Chulam, Coilum, Columbum, Kulan etc.) in various foreign notices, see K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *Foreign Notices of South India from Megasthenes to Ma Huan* (Madras, 1972).

² V. D. Krishnaswami, 'Megalithic types of south India', *Ancient India*, no. 5 (1949), pp. 38-40; B. K. Thapar, 'Porkalam, 1948: excavation of a Megalithic urn-burial', *ibid.*, no. 8 (1952), pp. 3-16; and Y. D. Sharma, 'Rock-cut caves in Cochin', *ibid.*, no. 12 (1956), pp. 93-115.

THE BACKGROUND

monuments shows that working on laterite reached a high water-mark in Kerala already in that remote past.

Laterite is the most commonly-used building stone in Kerala and the majority of the ancient temples have been built of blocks of laterite, generally reddish or reddish-brown in colour. It is soft at the time of quarrying but soon gets hardened because of dehydration. Of variegated colours, it contains irregular cavities and is not as durable and fine-textured as the granite. It appears that the granite tradition in architecture is an intrusive element which spread to Kerala from the Pāṇḍya or the Pallava country. All the cave-temples and their sculptural art followed the granite tradition, which was virtually relegated to the subordinate position soon after the eighth century, the main phase of rock-architecture in Kerala. Evidently, the deep-rooted laterite tradition asserted itself with the building of structural temples, because as a building stone, it is available easily and also of a tractable nature.

Laterite apart, timber is also an easily-available building material which has been used extensively in the construction of temples. Varied flora of Kerala also shows different zones starting from the littoral region to heavy deciduous forest with teak. High rainfall¹ here due to the south-west monsoon and different elevations are responsible for various kinds of evergreen deciduous forests, besides scrub jungles and grassy fields. The profusion of timber-producing trees made it possible for the emergence of a sound tradition of wooden architecture and sculpture, for which teak and jack fruit (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) have been commonly used. In practically all the temples, timber has been used for constructing the superstructure and in the Districts of Kottayam and Alleppey, there is a definite preponderance of wooden temples though they are built invariably on granite *adhishṭhānas*. And the sloping roof of the Kerala style of architecture, as already mentioned, was just to counteract the phenomenon of heavy rainfall.

The brief description of the geographical background will remain incomplete without a reference to the Paraśurāma legend, for it pertains to the creation of the land of Kerala. Legend has it that Paraśurāma, one of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, hurled his *paraśu* or 'axe' from Gokarnam, now in North Kanara, to Kanyakumari across the Arabian sea. Water along the two points receded at once disclosing a land-formation which was the Paraśurāmakṣhētra or Kerala. This legend does not appear to be of recent origin as the Tiruvalangadu plates of Rājendra I (1012-1044) refers to the event;² even Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* (canto IV, verses 53-54) makes a mention of it. It is not unlikely that the Paraśurāma legend preserves a distant memory of some reclamation of land from the sea but the date of this event is hard to compute in the present state of our historical research. Also noteworthy is the fact that the Agastya legend is confined to the east coast of south

¹ Annual rainfall (in milimetres) in different Districts of Kerala is as follows:- Kottayam: 2994.5; Alleppey: 3020.9; Quilon: 2760.2; Trichur 3159.4; Ernakulam: 3577.5; Trivandrum: 2001.6; Palghat 2459.2; Kozhikode: 3461.3; and Cannanore 3437.9. See *Monthly and Annual Normals of Rainfall and of Rainy Days—Based on Records from 1901-1950* (New Delhi, 1961), pp. 186-89.

² *South Indian Inscriptions*, III, pt. III (Madras, 1920), pp. 398 and 422.

India, whereas the west coast is associated with the Paraśumāra tradition; there are innumerable temples here claiming their descent to the direct effort of Paraśurāma.

Numerous changes, as is well-known, have taken place in recent Pleistocene along the coasts; new coast lines have emerged or the old areas have gone under the sea. For example, a large part of the Palk Strait or the Gulf of Mannar has been submerged in Recent times. Along the Kerala coasts also mud-banks of Pleistocene to Recent age came up separating the lake-like formations from the sea.¹ That such geological upheavals continued even in historical times is evident from a reference in the *Mūshika-vamśa*, a Sanskrit epic of the eleventh century, which records the encroachment of the sea that eventually engulfed the famous Buddhist monastery at Śrī-Mulavāsa.² But it seems that the Paraśurāma legend records the dim memory of a geographical cataclysm of much larger magnitude.

2. HISTORICAL

A. EARLY CHĒRAS AND THEIR CONTEMPORARIES

From the remote past, some part of the present Kerala was inhabited by the Chēras, possibly identical with the Keralaputra of Aśoka's second rock-edict. Yet their history during the pre-Christian times remains unknown although there may exist some contemporary megalithic vestiges in Kerala. Some glimpses of this people are, however, preserved in the earliest available strata of the Tamiḻ literature ascribable generally to the second century. A critical study of the literary data belonging to the early Śaṅgam age has made it possible to reconstruct their history though still mostly in twilight. The Chēras during this period emerged as the most important of the three south Indian powers—the other two being the Chōḷas and the Pāṇḍyas. As per the widely-accepted chronology, it was Udiyañjēral who founded the first Chēra dynasty in about A.D. 130, and the kings of this dynasty ruled for about hundred years or so.³ More than one branch of the dynasty seems to have been ruling simultaneously. Perhaps it was a case of *kula-saṅgha*, noticed in later times also in the history of the Mūshikas of north Kerala (below, p. 34).

¹ M. S. Krishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 531. References to Kerala's stone age cultures are omitted.

² T. A. Gopinatha Rao, 'Jaina and Bauddha Vestiges in Travancore', *Travancore Archaeological Series*, (Trivandrum, 1919), II, pt. I, pp. 121-23.

³ The chronology of the early Chēras followed in these pages is that of K. A. Nilakantha Sastri. See *A Comprehensive History of India*, II (Calcutta, 1957), pp. 517-530. One of the early writers to deal on this aspect on scientific line is K. G. Sessa Aiyer in his *Cēra Kings of the Śaṅgam Period* (London, 1937). He advocates a date of second century A.D. for the Śaṅgam age. More than twenty-five Chēra kings are mentioned in the Śaṅgam works, and hence, K. A. Nilakantha Sastri (*ibid.*, p. 528) thinks that 'the Chēra kingdom must have been a sort of family state in which all the adult males of the line had a share and interest—what Kauṭilya has called *kula-saṅgha*, a family group.' Kunjan Pillai (1970), *op. cit.*, pp. 136-55, also holds the same view and is of the opinion that the *Paṇḍurūppattu* describes kings belonging to three or four generations. He, however, dates the Śaṅgam age to the fifth century.

The Chēras apart, two other lines of rulers also made their presence felt in this part of the west coast: they are Āy-vēls—the Aioi of Ptolemy—and the chivalrous Naṇṇaṇs of Eḷiḷmalai or Mount D'Eli of the European writers, in north Malabar. Of the Āy chieftains, all of them claiming their descent from the Vṛishṇi-kula, Āy Aṇḍiraṇ, Titiyaṇ and Atiyaṇ are outstanding names in the chronicles of the Śaṅgam history.

B. THE ĀY-VĒLS

The Āy-vēls of the Śaṅgam celebrity reappeared on the political arena of south India some time in the eight century. As a neighbouring power, they were in perpetual conflict with the Pāṇḍyas; the epigraphical as well as certain literary evidences bear clear testimony to this strained relation. Of the Āy rulers of the times, the earliest is Śaḍaiyaṇ-Karunandaṇ of Malai-nāḍu occurring in the Kalugumalai (District Tirunelveli) inscription of the twenty-third year of the rule of Māraṇjaḍaiyaṇ.¹ The inscription records the marching of the Pāṇḍya army against the Āy chief and the destruction of the fort of Ariviyūrkkōṭṭai, which may be identified with Aruvikara, near Tiruvattar, in District Kanyakumari. It is also evident from the Madras Museum grant of the seventeenth regnal year of Māraṇjaḍaiyaṇ² that he attacked Viliṇjam, the sea-port and the capital of the later Āys. The Trivandrum Museum stone-inscription of Māraṇjaḍaiyaṇ³ records the fact that the Pāṇḍya army, in his twenty-seventh regnal year, left the Chēra forces in complete disarray and retired to the fort of Karaikkōṭṭai. It states further that 'the Chēra army, later on rallying round, pursued the enemy and set themselves to destroy the fort of Karaikkōṭṭai. In this attempt they inflicted some loss on the Pāṇḍya forces and Raṇakīrtti, a faithful servant of the Pāṇḍya king, fighting bravely and killing several of the opponents, fell struck by the arrow of a man, named Tādaṇ Perum-tiṇai of Perumūr'.⁴ All this shows the ding-dong nature of the battle that was fought between the Pāṇḍyas and the Āys.

The Āy king during the time of the Pāṇḍya monarch Māraṇjaḍaiyaṇ was either Śaḍaiyaṇ or Karunandaṇ, and this Māraṇjaḍaiyaṇ has to be identified with Jaṭila Parāntaka Neḍuṇjaḍaiyaṇ who ruled from 765 to 815. As the Kalugumalai inscription mentions the name of the Āy king as Śaḍaiyaṇ-Karunandār he may be, in all likelihood, Karunandaṇ, the son of Śaḍaiyaṇ. Nothing is known about these two kings except the probable fact of their getting involved in a long conflict with the Pāṇḍyas on the eastern border.

Two more kings of the Āy line of rulers are known from inscriptions, and they are Ko-kKarunandaḍakkaṇ and Vikramāditya Varaguṇa. It is the incomplete set of six copper-plates, known as the Huzur Office plates,⁵ that provide the first clear references to these kings, along with some of their achievements. Ko-kKarunandaḍakkaṇ, who bore the

¹ *South Indian Inscriptions*, XIV (The Pāṇḍyas), no. 31.

² K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom* (Madras, reprinted 1972), p. 58.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pt. VII, pp. 153-59.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, pt. VII, p. 154.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, pt. VII, pp. 1-14.

title Śrīvallabha, is known, besides the Huzur Office plates, from the two rock-inscriptions from Tiruvaiḍaikkōḍu,¹ District Kanyakumari. These are dated in the fourteenth (2+12) and the twenty-second (2+20) regnal years, and records some gift to the Mahādēva temple at Tiruvidakod. The fourth inscription of this king comes from the ruined Viṣṇu temple at Perumpaladur,² in District Trivandrum. Yet another inscription of this king is the fragmentary copper-plate from Tirupparappu, in District Trivandrum. The grant belongs to one Aviyalaṇṇaḍakkaṇ, who also bore the title Śrīvallava-pperumbaṇaigaṇ. He is mentioned as the manufacturer of arms to the king Karunandaḍakkaṇ.³

Regnal years apart, the records of Karunandaḍakkaṇ give the date in Kali era as well, for the Huzur Office plates are dated in the 1449087th day of the Kali era, which is equivalent to the fifteenth day of his ninth regnal year.⁴ When converted into Christian era it gives a date which is calculated variously by different scholars. According to T.A. Gopinatha Rao, it is A.D. 855-56,⁵ while Sewell takes it to be the 23rd of June A.D. 858.⁶ Recently, Kunjan Pillai computes the date as June 22 of 857.⁷

The Huzur Office inscription informs that Ko-kKarunandaḍakkaṇ of the Yādava family purchased from the *sabhā* of Miṇchiṇṇai the plot of land known locally as the *Uḷakku-ḍiviḷai*, fixed its boundaries, erected a temple on the site and installed the image of Viṣṇu. The village around the temple was named Pārthivaśēkharapuram and he also founded a *śālai*, in which arrangements were made to feed ninety-five *śaṭṭars*. As the inscription says, the *śālai* was modelled after the famous Kāndaḷur *śālai*; the latter became the target of successive attacks by the Chōḷa monarchs Rājarāja I and Rājendra I.

The temple at Pārthivaśēkharapuram (below, p. 135) is an example of a *tritāla-vimāna* built in typical Drāviḍa style prevalent in the Tamiḷ country. At present, there are a number of subshrines all round, most of which have the Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa type of superstructure. Unfortunately, but for the *adhishṭhāna*, the entire structure has undergone thorough renovation; as a result, not much can be made out about the original character of the main edifice. None the less, there are reasons to believe that the plan of the temple remains unaltered: it is square from the base to the *śikhara* and is of the *sāndhāra* type (fig. 18). It is worth-noting, as stated above, that the land for the new temple was bought from the Miṇchiṇṇai *sabhā*. And Miṇchiṇṇai is situated close to Pārthivaśēkharapuram; there, on a low hillock, stands an ancient temple-complex going by the name of Tirumalai. The deity has been called *Muṇchiṇṇai-Tirumalai dēvar* in an inscription of the seventh regnal year of

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pt. VII pp. 14-15.

² *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1961-62*, no. 135.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pt. XIII, pp. 197-200.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, pt. XIII, p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶ Robert Sewell, *The Historical Inscriptions of South India* (Madras 1932), p. 36.

⁷ Kunjan Pillai (1970), *op. cit.*, pp. 170-83. However, it has now been challenged by M. G.S. Narayanan in his *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala* (Trivandrum, 1972), p. 16.

THE BACKGROUND

Rājendra Chōla.¹ In this complex, too, there stands a square *vimāna*, in Drāviḍa style, dedicated to Śiva.

It need not be construed from the two foregoing examples that the Āy rulers patronized only the Drāviḍa style of architecture, because there is definite evidence of their building temples in Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style. The nucleus of the circular Viṣṇu temple at Perumpaladur, District Trivandrum, is an example of the latter type (fig. 22). It is also probable that the Sthāṇunāthasvāmī temple at Suchindram, District Kanyakumari, owed its origin to the patronage of the Āys, as their two inscriptions² from the temple show, and that it was also built originally in Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style (pl. LXIV B).

As the Āys claimed their ancestry from the Vṛishṇi-*kula* they were naturally worshippers of Viṣṇu. Their tutelary deity was Padmanābhasvāmī at Trivandrum sung by Nammāḷvār. At the same time, it is clear from various references cited above that Karunandaḍakkaṇ made gifts also to Śaiva shrines. Inscriptions of his successor Vikramāditya Varaguṇa reveal a still more liberal religious policy, as he offered gifts both to Jaina and Bauddha establishments. In fact, the Sanskrit part of the Paliyam plates of Varaguṇa begins with the invocation to Śauddhōdani (i.e., the son of Śuddhōdana or Buddha), the Dharma and the Saṅgha; furthermore, the donee was the Bhaṭṭāraka of Tirumūlapādam, generally identified with the famous Buddhist monastery of Śrīmūlavāsa.³ Again, his Chitalar inscription records that one Guṇadāngi-Kurattigal, the disciple of Araṭṭanami-bhaṭāra of Perayakkudi, made some gift of golden ornaments to the Bhaṭṭāriyār of the Tiruchchāraṇattu-malai.⁴ That Tiruchchāraṇattu-malai was a Jaina establishment is evident from the occurrence of a large-number of rock-cut reliefs of *tīrthaṅkaras* there.

Vikramāditya Varaguṇa was possibly the immediate successor of Karunandaḍakkaṇ. Though the Paliyam plates mention him only by Varaguṇa, he had perhaps the title Vikramāditya, as can be inferred from the Chitalar inscription of his twenty-eighth year, that being his last known regnal year, and the Huzur Office plates of his eighth regnal year. He must have, therefore, ruled for twenty-eight years, but it is not known for certain when he ascended the throne. It has been shown before (p. 18) that Karunandaḍakkaṇ began his reign in A.D. 857 and that his last known regnal year is twenty-two. In the circumstances, Varaguṇa must have succeeded Karunandaḍakkaṇ only after A.D. 879 or say 880. Surprisingly, on the basis of the astronomical data supplied by the Paliyam plates his date of birth has been calculated as A.D. 853. It is also held that he issued the Paliyam plates at the age of fifteen, since the date of the inscription is taken to be A.D. 868. Gopinatha Rao himself has shown that the Huzur Office inscription of Vikramāditya Varaguṇa,⁵ dated in his eighth regnal year, was issued soon after the construction of the Viṣṇu temple at Parthivapuram in A.D. 866. According to him, as the present record of the reign of Vikramāditya Varaguṇa

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, p. 148.

² K. K. Pillay, 'Two early Āy-vel inscriptions' in *Seminar on Inscriptions* (Madras, 1968), pp. 107-109.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pt. XII, pp. 187-193.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-195.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pt. II, p. 1.

mentions Pārthivaśēkharapuram, it must obviously be later than A.D. 864. Again, since Śāttaṇ Murugaṇ, the *ājñāpati* of the other document, has been mentioned as offering his daughter in marriage to Vikramāditya Varaguṇa, it may be inferred that the time of this prince was not much later than that of Ko-kKarunandaḍakkaṇ. Are we then to believe that Varaguṇa married Murugaṇ Śēndi *alias* Āy-kula-mādēvi, the daughter of Tenganāḍukilavaṇ when he was only a boy? All these anomalies can be obviated if December 28 of A.D. 898 or December 29 of A.D. 925 is taken as the date of the Paliyam grant which seems to have been issued towards the fag-end of Varaguṇa's life.¹ Of the two dates, the latter appears to be more acceptable because it can easily take into account Pārantaka's (907-955) attack of Pāṇḍya country which was then ruled by Māṇavarmaṇ Rājasimha II (905-20). The discovery of Parāntaka's inscription at Suchindram speaks of the extension of the Chōḷa hegemony over some parts of Āy country. Vikramāditya Varaguṇa, therefore, ruled for forty-five years from A.D. 880 to 925, while Karunandaḍakkaṇ's reign covered roughly the period from 857 to 880.

Nothing is known about the Āys after Varaguṇa. Some authorities are inclined to take Vira-Kōta, who was appointed by the king to protect the donated land referred to in the Paliyam plates, as the successor of Vikramāditya Varaguṇa. Whoever may have been his successor, the rising Chōḷas on the east and the resurgent Chēras on the north must have eclipsed completely this ancient line of rulers. It was the Āy territory which had to bear the shock of successive Chōḷa attacks after Rājarāja's coming to the throne. But it goes to their credit for transforming *śālais* into impregnable strongholds and centres of military training; not even the formidable Rājarāja or Rājendra could wipe them out. A graphic description of the life and training in the *śālais* is preserved in the *Kuvalayamālā*, a Prākṛit *champu* by Uddyotana-sūri (728-778). Some account from this work has been given in a subsequent chapter (below, p. 134) dealing with the history of the temple-architecture in the Āy country.

C. THE SECOND CHĒRA DYNASTY

A long historical night intervenes between the fall of the first Chēra dynasty and the rise of the second one, which has been described often as the Kulaśēkharas of Mahōdayapuram. Although the Pallavas of Kāñchī and the Pāṇḍyas of Madurai stole the limelight as early as the sixth century, that is soon after the annihilation of the Kaḷabhra power, it took, curiously enough, three more centuries for the Chēras to re-establish themselves. On the other hand, the re-emergence of the Āys on the political scene seems to have taken place in the seventh or the eighth century as is evident from their references in the early Pāṇḍya records. It is now generally held that Kulaśēkharavarmaṇ was responsible for the revival of the Chēra power in *circa* A.D. 800. He had his capital at Mahōdayapuram or modern Thiruvanchikulam, then a flourishing centre of commerce. But are we to assume a complete political vacuum in Kerala prior to A.D. 800? Petty chieftains, it is reasonable

¹ Kunjan Pillai (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 177.

to surmise, must have had their days. At the same time, how to account for the statement in the Velvikudi grant (A.D. 769-70) of the Pāṇḍya king Neḍuñjaḍaiyaṇ that Māra-varmaṇ's conquest of Kerala had taken place several times at the strongly fortified town of Puliyūr?¹ If the Kerala ruler were a weak king he would have submitted meekly to the Pāṇḍya monarch without raising the standard of revolt time and again. All this may tend to show that the dark phase before A.D. 800 will be bridged soon with the progress of historical research. But in these pages we propose to tread the familiar path,² though with some diversions here and there.

Generally, Kulaśekhara-varmaṇ (800-820) is identified with Kulaśekhara-ālvār, one of the twelve famous Vaishṇava saints. Tradition associates Kulaśekhara-ālvār³ with the construction of the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram (below, p. 60), near Thiruvanchikulam, District Trichur. Thus Kulaśekhara-varmaṇ, remembered in traditional accounts and various literary works, brought about revolutionary changes not only in politics but also in religious sphere. Kulaśekhara's political successor Rājaśekhara-varmaṇ, known also from the Vāḷapaḷḷi inscription,⁴ was an equally brilliant religious teacher; he was none else than the great Śaiva saint Chēramāṇ Perumāḷ Nāyanār,⁵ a close friend of Sundaramūrti.⁶ The Śiva temple at Thiruvanchikulam (below, p. 60), District Trichur, is said to have received patronage from both the saints; moreover, Viṛalmiṇḍa Nāyanār, hailing from Kerala, was their contemporary. It is thus evident that Kulaśekhara popularized the Vaishṇava tradition in Kerala, while his successor worked with the same zeal for the Śaiva form of the *Bhakti* cult.⁷ The great Advaita philosopher Śaṅkarāchārya appears to be the contemporary of both Kulaśekhara and Rājaśekhara. In the *Śaṅkara-vijaya* by Mādhavāchārya, Rājaśekhara has been given the credit of presenting three *nāṭakas* to the great Advaita teacher; in this work Rājaśekhara has been referred to as the king of Kerala.

In the Vāḷapaḷḷi copper-plate inscription, which is in an excellent state of preservation, Rājaśekhara-dēva is shown bearing the imperial titles like *Śrīrāja*, *Rājādhirāja*, *Paramēśvara* and *Bhaṭṭāraka*. The inscription is dated in the twelfth regnal year and registers some transactions, which took place between the people of the eighteen *nāḍu* belonging to Tiruvarṇuvay and the townsmen of Vāḷaippaḷḷi who assembled under the king's presidentship. It was resolved in that meeting that 'those who hinder the performance of the firmly established *bali* ceremony (*muṭṭāppali*) should be liable to pay a fine of one hundred

¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, XVII (1924), pp. 293-301.

² Kunjan Pillai, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-265, and A. Sreedhara Menon, *A Survey of Kerala History* (Kottayam, 1967), pp. 123-137.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, V, pp. 104-114.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, pt. I, pp. 8-14.

⁵ *Ibid.*, V, pp. 96-104.

⁶ He is the last of the three hymnists of *Dēvaram*.

⁷ In Kerala, there are thirteen sacred Vaishṇava shrines—*divya-dēśams* of Malaināḍu—sung by Nammālvār and Tirumaṅgai-ālvār, living in the late eighth and the latter half of ninth century A.D. respectively.

dināra' etc.¹ The use of the term *dināra*, evidently derived from *dinarius*, is noteworthy in the present context. To assume that it denotes the circulation of Roman coin is rather anachronistic. The term *dināra* occurs in some contemporary Pāṇḍya records of the eighth and the ninth century.² It is well-known that *dināra* is the unit of gold currency of the pre-Islamic Arabs and that it came into circulation after the gold currency was reformed in the days of 'Abd-al-Malik (685-705) of the Umayyad dynasty.³ In the circumstances, the *dināra* of the Vāḷapalli copper-plate has to be taken as the Arab gold currency, which must have been in circulation during the ninth century. Incidentally, it speaks of Kerala's favourable balance of trade with the Arab world. By this time, Christianity had certainly secured its rightful place, and the Jews, too, must have arrived. It was thus a period which witnessed the arrival of new people, new commercial outlook, new religious thoughts and ideologies, impacts of which must have transmitted to all strata of the society.

The successor of Rājaśekhara was Sthāṇu Ravivarman, who has left a number inscriptions of great historical value. Also known as Ravivarma Kulaśekhara, he, as his name (*Sthāṇu-liṅga*) denotes, was also a Śaiva. That he was a contemporary of the Chōḷa king Āditya (871-907) may be affirmed from an undated inscription from the Mahādēva temple at Tillaisthanam, near Thanjavur, District Thanjavur. The said epigraph registers the gift of one hundred sheep for a perpetual lamp to the god by Kaḍambamahādēvī, the wife of Vikki Aṇṇaṇ.⁴ And this Vikki Aṇṇaṇ, as the inscription records, enjoyed honour and privileges conferred both by the Chōḷa king Rājakēśarivarman (Āditya I) and the Chēra king Chēramaṇ Ko-trāṇu Iravi (Sthāṇu-Ravi). Sastri writes, 'Here is clear indication that Vikki-Aṇṇaṇ who so honoured must have distinguished himself in some manner that greatly pleased these two kings. Can it be that he was a Cēra general whom Sthāṇu-Ravi employed to co-operate with Āditya in his Koṅgu campaign against the Pāṇḍyas? We know that Āditya's son Parāntaka married a daughter of the Cēra king. It is natural to assume that this friendship between the two ancient lines of rulers began with the extension of Cōḷa rule to Koṅgu'.⁵

A few inscriptions of the time of Sthāṇu-Ravi are also known to us, and of them, the most famous is the Tarisapalli copper-plate grant,⁶ constituting an important landmark in the history of Christianity in India. Dated in his fifth regnal year, it records the gift of

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, p.9.

² *South Indian Inscriptions*, XIX (The Pāṇḍyas), no. 9. The inscription, belonging to Mārañjaḍaiyaṇ comes from the Tiruttaḷiśvara temple at Tiruppattur, in District Ramanathapuram. It refers to the donation of ten *dināras* for a lamp to the god. In some other inscriptions occurs the term *diramam*, which may be the corruption of *dināra*.

³ Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London, 1937), p. 217.

⁴ *Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy for 1911*, no. 286.

⁵ K. A. Nilakaṇṭha Sastri, *The Cōḷas* (Madras, 1955), p. 115.

⁶ 'Three Inscriptions of Sthanu Ravi', *Travancore Archaeological Series*, III, pp. 60-86. Two of the documents belong to the Syrian Christians at Kottayam; one of these is dated to the reign of Sthāṇu Ravi, while the other contains matter which is more or less a continuation of the first but very much fragmentary. The third copper-plate of the same king belongs to the Mūviḍattumīcheri Illam at Tiruvalla.

vast properties at Kurakkēṇi-Kollam (Quilon) to the Church of Tarisā, no longer in existence. It was built by the priest Maruvāṇṇ Sapīr Īśō, with the permission of the governor of Vēṇāḍu by name Ayyaṇḍigal Tiruvadi. There is, however, some difficulty in arriving at the exact name of the builder of the church as in line 5 he has been referred to as Eśō dā Tapīr though in all other instances he is called Maruvāṇṇ Sapīr Īśō. But the cumulative evidence of all the records dealing with the foundation of the Church points to the fact that Eśō dā Tapīr is the same as Sapīr Eśō or Īśō. It has to be remembered that Syrian Christians migrated to Kerala much earlier than this event.

A stone inscription of Sthāṇu-Ravi, dated in his eleventh regnal year (855)¹ is said to have been discovered in the Kudalmanikkam temple at Irinjalakuda, District Trichur. The occurrence of a number of Chēra inscriptions from this area proves clearly the importance that it enjoyed under the rule of the second Chēra dynasty. Two villages nearby—Tāḷakkad and Avaṭṭattūr—have yielded half a dozen Vaṭṭeḷuttu inscriptions of the Chēra kings but most of them belong to the time of Kōdai-Ravivarmaṇ. A stone slab set up in the compound of the church at Tāḷakkad contains two inscriptions engraved on either side of the stone. One of its faces contains twenty-two lines, the first twelve lines of which are in bold and early characters, whereas the last ten lines and the writing on the other side are in the script of the eleventh century. The palaeography of the first part resembles the Kottayam plates of Sthāṇu-Ravi. Significantly, the record is dated in the third (?) regnal year of one Irāyaśiṅgap-Perumāṇḍigal or Rājasimha-Perumāṇḍi whose actual identification is uncertain. The record, ascribable to the ninth century, registers an assignment of land by villagers of Tāḷaikkāṭṭūr to the Vāṇiyar or merchants who had settled there for establishing a market (*pīḍigai*). Two of these merchants, named Sāttaṇ-Vaḍugaṇ and Iravi-Sāttaṇ, belonged to the Manigramam community.² Whatever may be the chronological position of this lithic record, the copper-plate grant from Tiruvalla is yet another milestone of Sthāṇu-Ravi. Dated in the seventeenth regnal year it mentions a *sabhā* of Tiruvāṇṇiyāy and the temple-servants (*aḍigal*) regarding the feeding on the Oṇam day.³

It is evident from the foregoing that the Chēra monarch followed a policy of religious tolerance. What is more significant is the fact that Sthāṇu-Ravi's times saw the arrival of Islam in Kerala. The Arab traveller Sulaiman visited the Malabar coast, and there was also a close maritime contact with China. Overseas trade and commerce must have brought prosperity and the spurt in temple-architecture was the visible expression of this flourishing economy.

It is commonly held now that Sthāṇu-Ravi was succeeded by Rāmavarmaṇ Kulaśēkhara (885-917) though some scholars take in his place Vijayarāghavadēva, figuring in the Tarisāpalli grant as *kōyil-aḍigari*. He was a contemporary of the Chōḷa monarch Parāntaka I (907-955) since one of his inscriptions from Tiruvottiyur, datable to A.D. 936

¹ Kunjan Pillai (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 225. It refers to temple-trustees and temple-servants.

² *Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy for 1927*, nos. 358 and 359.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, p. 85. Here is the earliest mention of Oṇam festival, the most important festival of Kerala.

refers to a Chēra princess Nīlī, who offered some gifts to the temple, as the daughter of the Kēraḷarāja Vijayarāghavadēva.¹ Whoever might have succeeded Sthāṇu-Ravi there cannot be any doubt about the growing influences of the Chēras over the entire Kerala. In fact, the political power of the Chēras reached its zenith under the rule of the next king Kōdai-Ravivarman known from numerous temple-inscriptions. Kēraḷakētu *alias* Gōda of the *Mūshika-vamśa* may be the same as Kōdai Ravivarman (below p. 33). His inscriptions come from Triprargod² and Puttur-*aṁśam*,³ in District Malappuram, Tali⁴ and Avaṭṭattūr,⁵ in District Trichur, and Tripunittura,⁶ in District Ernakulam. An inscription from the Gaṇapati temple at Indyanur,⁷ District Malappuram, is dated to 27+1st year of one Kō-Kōdai-Ravi, who may be a later king ruling over some parts of Kerala. His method of counting regnal years is somewhat different from Kōdai-Ravivarman, the successor of Rāmavarman Kulaśēkhara.

The earliest known regnal year of Kōdai-Ravivarman is the fifteenth occurring in the Chokur temple-inscription in Puttur-*aṁśam*. Written in Vaṭṭeḷuttu characters, the inscription simply refers to some gift of land, presumably to the temple. From the Tali temple, which has been described in the inscription as Nityavichārēśvara temple, was copied a record dated in the seventeenth regnal year when Jupiter stood in the zodiacal sign of Mithuna or Gemini. It records a transaction made by the residents and officers of the temple regarding the distribution of three hundred *kalam* of paddy received from the two villages, Ukkiramaṅgalam and Miyāṇamaṅgalam. Dated in the twentieth regnal year, the stone inscriptions from the Śiva temple at Avaṭṭattūr were issued when Jupiter was in the Kaṇṇi-rāśi or Virgo. It is noteworthy that at least three epigraphs from Avattattūr—Āvaṭṭiputtūr of the inscriptions—bear the same regnal year. One of them records, ‘the thousand,’ the ‘twenty-seven,’ and the *poduva* of the two *kuḍis* of Āvaṭṭiputtūr being present, made for offerings to the local temple Peruntirukkōyil. The donor appears to have been a Chēra queen (Śeramāṇ-Mādēvī) who gave lands in a village which was made a *kīlīdu* of Āvaṭṭiputtūr and assigned its *rakshābhāga* to the temple’. Next in order is the Tirupparangodu inscription registering some gift of land in the regnal year 23+4. His last known regnal year is the thirtieth mentioned in an inscription from the Santānagopāla-kṛishṇasvāmin temple at Tripunittura.

Kōdai-Ravi is a very common name and occurs frequently in different inscriptions. For example, a certain Kōdai-Ravi of Neḍumpuṛaiyūr-nāḍu appears as a chieftain ruling over the Nedumpura region in District Trichur. Two Pāṇḍya records from Cheranmahadevi, District Tirunelveli (nos. 665 and 666 of 1916), refer to a Kōdai-Ravivarman

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, III, p. 162.

² *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy* 1895, no. 219. Also *South Indian Inscriptions*, V, no. 783.

³ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy* 1901, no. 13. Also *South Indian Inscriptions*, VII, no. 173.

⁴ ‘Tali inscription of Kodai Ravi: 17th year’, *Epigraphia Indica*, XXVIII (1949-50), pp. 216-220. Also, *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy* 1924, no. 344 and *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VIII, pp. 40-45.

⁵ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy* 1927, nos. 360-363.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1903, no. 1 and *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, pp. 64-65.

⁷ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy* 1936-37, no. 287.

who may be a brother-in-law of the Pāṇḍya king Jaṭāvarmaṇ *alias* Kulaśēkhara.¹ Leaving all these doubtful identities it will be seen that no inscription of Kōdai-Ravivarmaṇ comes from south Kerala; as a matter of fact, Tripunittura marks the southernmost provenance of his records. Naturally, a doubt arises if the Āy territory were really annexed to the Chēra empire. Similarly, no inscription of Kōdai-Ravi has so far been discovered from the Mūshika country, and the latter possibly maintained a friendly relation with the Chēras. After the fall of the Āys various chieftains—and of them, the Vēṇāḍu line of rulers is the most important—acknowledged the Chēra supremacy. At that time, an extension of sovereignty was not based on the conception of annexation but on mere acknowledgement of one's overlordship. Consequently, the minor rulers and the petty chieftains being autonomous in their own principedom continued to hold the real ownership of land. Moreover, with the acceleration of temple-building activities, the Nambūdiri Brāhmaṇas, as custodians of temple-properties, started creating their own lever of power within each principality.

The gradual expansion of the Chēra power might have brought them on the brink of war with the rising Chōḷas. Indu-Kōḍaivarmaṇ (944-962), the successor of Kōdai-Ravivarmaṇ, got himself involved in a military conflict with the Chōḷa king Parāntaka I (907-955) but it did not erupt into a major clash because of latter's death; and further, the event was followed by the accession of a number weak kings on the Chōḷa throne. Anyway, Indu-Kōḍaivarmaṇ's inscriptions have been discovered from a number of places like Tali,² Tirkakara,³ Muzhikulam,⁴ Pudukkod⁵ and Tiruvammundur⁶ and it is interesting to note that the find-spots of his inscriptions show central and southern Kerala as the sphere of his main activities. His earliest record, probably dated in the third regnal year, comes from the Bhagavatī temple at Pudukkod in District Palghat. It is very much damaged but its purport is clear: it records a transaction made by the residents of the eighteen districts of Pudukkod. Tirumuzhikulam or Muzhikulam, an ancient Vaishṇava centre in District Kottayam, has yielded an unfinished record dated in the regnal year 5+1. There are three inscriptions from Tirkakara, and the earliest of them bears the regnal year 5+5 when Jupiter was transiting Mīna or Pisces. Dated in the eleventh year opposite to the fifth when Jupiter stood in Simha or Leo, the second record furnishes a long list of individuals, who have been called *sādhus* along with the names of their villages. The third epigraph of Indu-Kōḍaivarmaṇ from Tirkakara is unfortunately damaged, and the date as well as the position of Jupiter are lost. Tiruvammundur, yet another sacred spot of the Vaishṇavas, has a fragmentary record dated in the year opposite to the fifth year. From the Tali temple has been copied an inscription, which furnishes the last known regnal year (11+6th) of Kō-Indu-Kōḍaivarmaṇ. It records a settlement arrived at by [Vay]chchaṇ Pōndi of

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, p. 64.

² *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1924*, no. 341.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, III, pp. 161-73.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 189-91.

⁵ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1924*, no. 354.

⁶ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, V, pp. 33-34.

Peymaṇalmaṇṇam in Nedumpuṇaiyūr-nāḍu with the people and officers of eighteen districts of Nityavichārēśvara for providing food on the Aippigai and Chittirai festival days.

Indu-Kōdaivarmaṇ's successor was one Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ known from various records. It can be inferred from palaeographical study and internal evidence of inscriptions of both the kings that Indu-Kōdai comes anterior to one Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ.¹ Scholars, however, assume the existence of three Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇs, and all of them followed Indu-Kōdai. Inscriptions bearing the regnal years of some Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ or the other have been recovered from sites like Pullur,² in District Cannanore, Tirunelli,³ in District Kozhikode, Karyad-aṁśam,⁴ in District Malappuram, Tali,⁵ in District Trichur, Perunnyail,⁶ Tirukodittanam,⁷ and Tirumuzhikulam,⁸ in District Kottayam, and Tirukkakkarai (Tirkakara),⁹ in District Ernakulam. Of these sites, Tirkakara and Tirukodittanam have produced the largest number of inscriptions. To this list may be added the famous Jewish copper-plate of the thirty-eighth regnal year, ascribable to A.D. 1000.¹⁰ In terms of regnal years, irrespective of the kings they denote, these records belong to the years 1+1 to 58. If these are converted into Christian era, the period covered by these inscriptions is from c. A.D. 962 to 1020. But a cursory glance at the position of Jupiter in various records will show that these dates pertain to three different kings bearing the same name.

On the basis of Jupiter's position, it is perhaps convenient to divide all such inscriptions that bear the name of Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ into three groups. The Tirukkakkarai inscriptions of the sixth (2+4) and the fifty-eighth years and the Peruneyil inscription of the fourteenth (2+12) regnal year may be attributed to a Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ who ruled from A.D. 962 to 1020. According to the astronomical calculation of Swamikannu Pillai, the fourteenth regnal year of the Peruneyil inscription is equivalent to March 12 of A.D. 1060.¹¹ This computation has recently been revised by Kunjan Pillai, in the light of various historical facts, and also taking into account the testimony of the Tirukkakkarai inscription of the fifty-eighth regnal year, to March 12 of A.D. 976.¹² In all likelihood, the Peruneyil inscription refers to Gōvardhana Mārttaṇḍaṇ,¹³ governor of Vēnāḍu, ruling over Naṇṇulaināḍu. At first he was only the governor of Naṇṇulaināḍu while

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, III, pp. 161-62.

² *Annual Report on Epigraphy for 1963-64*, no. B. 125.

³ *Epigraphia Indica*, XXVIII (1949-50), pp. 216-220. The place has yielded half a dozen copper-plates.

⁴ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1901*, no. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1924, no. 348.

⁶ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, p. 34.

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 31-45 and V, pp. 176-190.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 45-46.

⁹ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 31-51, and III, pp. 179-184.

¹⁰ *Epigraphia Indica*, III (1894-95), pp. 66-69.

¹¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 49-51.

¹² Kunjan Pillai, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

¹³ This part of the epigraph is slightly damaged and the name of the Vēnāḍu governor cannot be read clearly.

Śrīvallabhaṇ Kōḍaivarmaṇ held the governorship of Vēṇāḍu; in fact, the evidence of the Tirukkadithanam inscription of the year 2+? points unmistakably to the same conclusion. In the circumstances, the Peruneyil inscription of the fourteenth regnal year has to be dated posterior to the above-mentioned epigraph from Tirkodittanam.

There are records to show that Gōvardhana Mārttaṇḍaṇ and Śrīvallabha Kōḍaivarmaṇ had been holding independent charges of their respective chieftaincies. Vēṇāḍuḍaiya Śrīvallabhaṇ Kōḍaivarmaṇ is known from his Māmbaḷḷi copper-plate¹ and the two Tiruvanvandur stone-inscriptions,² the copper-plate being dated to Kollam 149 (A.D. 973) when Jupiter stood in Tulā or Libra. Evidently, the governorship of Vēṇāḍu came in the hands of Mārttaṇḍa only after A.D. 973. Both Peruneyil and the Tirukkadithanam inscriptions of the fourteenth regnal (2+12) should, therefore, be placed, after the issue of the Māmbaḷḷi copper-plate of A.D.973, some time in A.D.976. In other words, Śrīvallabhaṇ Kōḍaivarmaṇ lost his governorship of Vēṇāḍu within three years of the issue of the said copper-plate grant. Whether it was a natural succession or a case of dethroning an ambitious chieftain is not easy to settle. That Mārttaṇḍa continued to rule over Vēṇāḍu till A.D. 1000 as the feudatory of Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ can be established from the Tirukkadithanam inscription of the twenty-sixth regnal year (2+24) and the Cochin copper-plate grant of the thirty-eighth year (2+36). All this evidence pertains to a Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ who ruled from A.D. 962 to 1020. He may be called Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ I who had to bear the brunt of the Chōḷa attack that descended into Kerala successively under the leadership of Rājarāja and Rājendra Chōḷa.

Now we come to the second set of inscriptions furnishing proofs of the existence of Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ II, who ruled most of the time conjointly with Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ I. In the Tirukkakkarai inscription of Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ I, dated in the 2+4th regnal year, figures one Kōḍai-Kēraḷaṇ of Śēṇumaṇṇappuḷai as the donor of the grant. In that year Jupiter was posited in Rishabha or Taurus. Kōḍai-Kēraḷaṇ and his two brothers are mentioned in two other epigraphs: Tirukkakkarai inscriptions of 2+19th year when Jupiter stood in Kumbha or Aquarius and of 2+29th year when Jupiter was transiting Dhanu or Sagittarius respectively.³ Both these records belong to one and the same king but he may not be the same as Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ I, though it is certain that the donor served both the monarchs. There are good grounds to identify Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ of the Tirukkakkarai inscription, just mentioned above, with the one mentioned in one of the Tirunelli plates.⁴

Undoubtedly, the Tirunelli copper-plate inscription provides the best evidence for the purpose of computing dates in terms of Christian era. The date given there is the

¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, IX (1907-8), pp.234 ff. and *Travancore Archaeological Series*, IV, pp. 1-16.

² *Ibid.*, II, pp. 22-25.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, III, pp. 161-62 and 179-183.

⁴ There are seven copper-plate grants from Tirunelli. See R. Vasudeva Poduval, *Travancore Inscriptions: A Topographical List* (Trivandrum 1941), pp. 313-14.

thirty-fifth year opposite the sixth which is opposite to the second year of the king ($2+6+35=43$ rd year); in this year Jupiter was in Libra.¹ On the basis of the astronomical data supplied by the copper-plate, the date has been calculated as Wednesday, March 1 of A.D. 1021. This Bhāskara Ravivarman, therefore, ascended the throne in A.D. 978. Some other inscriptions, which may be ascribed to this king, are Tirukkakkarai inscriptions dated to 23 ($2+21$) and 31 ($2+29$), and Peruneyil inscription of 38 ($2+36$) regnal years.² It is then certain that he ruled at least for 43 years i.e., till A.D. 1021, the date furnished by the Tirunelli copper-plate. He was also embroiled into successive wars with the Chōlas. The discovery of several copper-plates at Tirunelli in the Wynad forest is significant as it may indicate his establishing a temporary headquarters at the time of the Chōla onslaughts deep into the Chēra country. We will revert to this topic after considering the question of his successor.

It is difficult to say when Bhāskara Ravivarman II ended his rule and who actually succeeded him. Kunjan Pillai³ and Menon⁴ think that Bhāskara Ravivarman II was succeeded by Vira-Kēraḷa, who in turn was followed by one Rājasimha on the Chēra throne. Quite likely Vira-Kēraḷa and Rājasimha do not belong to the main line of the Chēras. Vira-Kēraḷa, who was trampled to death by the furious elephant Attivāraṇa of Rājādhirāja, has been mentioned in the epigraph immediately after the Pāṇḍya king Mānābharaṇa and just before the Vēṇāḍu ruler, thereby suggesting a contiguity of his territory to the Pāṇḍya kingdom. Some interesting sidelights on this issue are afforded by a critical interpretation of some of the inscriptions from the Gōpālasvāmin temple at Mannarkoyil, near Ambasamudram, District Tirunelveli.⁵ One of the inscriptions (108 of 1905) here mentions the phrase Mānābharaṇa-chaturvēdimaṅgalam, while the temple has been called Rājendra-Chōla-Viṇṇagaradēvar. The record is dated in the sixth regnal year of the Chōla viceroy Jaṭāvarman *alias* Sundara-Chōla Pāṇḍyadēva. From the same temple has been discovered an inscription (no. 112 of 1905) which records its construction by a Chēra king Rājasimha, who must have called the temple Rājendra-Chōla-Viṇṇagaradēvar after the name of the reigning monarch. Rājendra Chōla, according to the text of this inscription, made a gift of land to the temple from his palace at Kāñchīpuram, in his twenty-fourth regnal year. It has also been stipulated there that the grant would take effect from the fifteenth year of Jaṭāvarman Sundara-Chōla Pāṇḍyadēva. Broadly speaking, the latter's fifteenth year may be equated with the monarch's twenty-fourth year (A.D. 1036). The inscription, which alludes to Mānābharaṇa-chaturvēdimaṅgalam, was engraved at least five years before the Rājendra's gifts of land. Does it mean that the temple was rebuilt by the Chēra monarch

¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, XVI (1921-22), pp. 339-345.

² *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 38-45.

³ Kunjan Pillai (1970), *op. cit.*, pp. 241-43.

⁴ A. Sreedhara Menon (1967), *op. cit.*, pp. 130-31.

⁵ *Annual Report on Epigraphy for 1905*, nos. 108, 111-113.

between A.D. 1031-1036?. But from our point of view the association of Mānābharapa, Rājendra Chōla and some Chēra kings is significant once it is analysed in the light of the historical introduction of Rājādhirāja's inscription.

Apart from Rājasimha, the inscriptions from this place record the name of another Chēra ruler Rājarājadēva who is mentioned in two inscriptions (nos. 111 and 113 of 1905) from the same place. One of the inscriptions is dated in the sixteenth regnal year of the Chōla viceroy. Rājasimha appears to have been his predecessor, and he died some time in 1035. Neither this Rājasimha nor Rājarājadēva, not to speak of Vira-Kēraḷa, can be assigned a place in the main line of Chēra genealogy. During Rājendra and Rājādhirāja's time the southern half of Kerala was virtually under the sway of the Chōla monarchs who might have set up a scion of the Chēra family as their vassal. To this line of feudatories may be included Kēraḷakēśari Adhirājādhirāja figuring as a donor in a Tirukkannapuram (District Thanjavur) inscription of Kulōttuṅga I Chōla's thirty-sixth regnal year.¹

No inscription of these Chēra feudatories has come from Kerala; the Talakkad inscription of one Rāyasīṅga-Perumāṇḍigal, of the ninth century, cannot be ascribed to this Rājasimha, who was just a puppet of the Chōla monarchs. It is then evident that neither Vira-Kēraḷa nor Rājasimha possesses a rightful place in the Chēra genealogy. The Chōla inroads into Kerala during Rājendra's time must have shaken the political fabric of the Chēras who had possibly a nominal hold over the chieftains. The historical introduction of Rājādhirāja's inscription² speaks of at least three Kerala rulers: the Vēṇāḍu ruler, Irāmaḷaḍam or the Mūshikas and the strong Villavaṇ (Chēra). About Villavaṇ, the inscription records, that he in his terror, hid himself in the jungle. That some geographical order of sequence has been followed in the description has to be accepted. Yet the most important statement is the mention of the Villavaṇ who had fled to the jungle. It leaves no room for doubt that the powerful Villavaṇ was the actual Chēra overlord who may be none else than Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ II. By the time (1021) of the issue of the Tirunelli copper-plate he might have been forced to leave his capital and shift to jungle fortress. He must have, therefore, escaped the hostility of Rājādhirāja; hence, might have ruled for some more years. Hypothetically speaking, his reign might have ended by about A.D. 1025.

Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ II seems to have been succeeded by Iravi-Rāmaṇ known from the Tirukkadittanam inscription dated in his third (1+2) regnal year, when Jupiter was in Mīna or Pisces.³ It refers to one Iyakkaṇ-Śirikaṇṭhaṇ of Maṇalmaṇṇam as governor of Naṇṇulai-nāḍu. His was a short reign of say ten years, i.e., 1025-1035. Iravi Rāmaṇ or Ravi Rāmavarmaṇ was succeeded by Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ III who ruled at least for fifty-five years.

¹ *Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy 1922*, no. 519.

² *South Indian Inscriptions*, III, no. 28.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, V, pp. 172-73.

The inscriptions of Bhāskara Ravivarman III (1035-90) have been discovered from Tirkodittanam, dated in the second (1+1) regnal year when Jupiter was occupying the zodaical sign Tulā or Libra,¹ Tali dated in the thirteenth (11+2) regnal year, when Jupiter was again in Tulā,² and Tirumuzhikulam, dated in the forty-ninth (1+48) regnal year.³ That he somehow retained his hold over central Kerala till his forty-ninth year (1084) is apparent from the find-spots of his epigraphs. It was doubtless a stormy period which saw the Chōla invasions under Vīra-Rājendra (1063-1069) and later under Kulōttuṅga I (1070-1122). Soon after Kulōttuṅga's reconquest of the Pāṇḍya country and Kerala between his seventh and eleventh years, Bhāskara Ravivarman had to transfer his war-headquarters to north Malabar, as can be guessed from the Pullur (District Cannanore) stone-inscription of his fifty-fifth regnal year.⁴ In the Tirumuzhikkulam inscription, he has been described as Manukulādityan,⁵ and it may be equated with the title Manu-kulādichchadēvar of the Pullur record. It may be pointed out here that his inscriptions have been dated differently and the number 2 of the year was no longer the fixed digit.

Rāmavarma Kulāśekhara, one of the greatest rulers of the Chēra dynasty, succeeded Bhāskara Ravivarman III at Mahodayapuram. He must have ascended the throne between the months of Dhanus and Karkaṭaka of the Kollam year 265 (i.e., between January and July, 1090).⁶ His inscriptions have been recovered from places like Tiruvalur,⁷ Quilon,⁸ and Peruneyil.⁹ In the Peruneyil inscription (District Kottayam) of 2+8th regnal year, he has been called Kulāśekhara Kōyiladhikāri, while the Rāmēśvaram temple-inscription from Quilon describes him as Rāman Tiruvaḍi Kulāśekhara Kōyiladhikāri. The record is dated in the Kollam year 278 i.e., A.D. 1103. Rāmavarma Kulāśekhara seems to have retrieved much of the Chēra prestige in his sustained fight with Kulōttuṅga I. Most likely, he held the reins of the administration, independent of other members of the royal family, and eventually founded the Vēṇāḍu line of rulers.

Some members of the Chēra family continued to rule from some place in north Malabar, as can be surmised by a number of records disclosing new names from places like Indyanur¹⁰ and Tiruvannur¹¹ in Districts Malappuram and Kozhikode

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, V, p. 190.

² *Annual Report on Epigraphy* 1924, no. 348.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 45-46.

⁴ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy* 1963-64, no. B. 125.

⁵ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, p. 45.

⁶ *Epigraphia Indica*, XVIII (1925-26), pp. 340-45.

⁷ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, IV, pp. 145-46. It is dated in the regnal year 2+1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, V, 40-46.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1936-37, nos. 285-287.

¹¹ *Annual Report of Epigraphy* 1895, no. 220.

respectively. Contemporary to Rāmavarma Kulaśēkhara was one Kō-Śrīvaḷarāma figuring in the stone-inscription from the Gaṇapati temple at Indyanur. He may possibly be identified with Rāma of the Tiruvannur inscription, as both the records are dated in the regnal year 4+4, counted in the same fashion. One Kō-Kōdai-Ravi is also known from the same temple-site.¹ In all probability Kō-Kōdai-Ravi of the Indyanur inscription is different from Kōdai Ravivarman, the successor of Rāmavarman Kulaśēkhara I. While Kō-Kōdai-Kōdai's record is dated in the fourth regnal year, Kō-Kōdai Ravi's inscription bears the date 27+1st year. Palaeographically all these epigraphs from Indyanur may be ascribed to the twelfth century. Perhaps the Indyanur branch, if the term may be used, continued to rule contemporaneously with the Vēṇāḍu line of kings founded by Kōyilādhikāri Rāmavarma Kulaśēkhara.

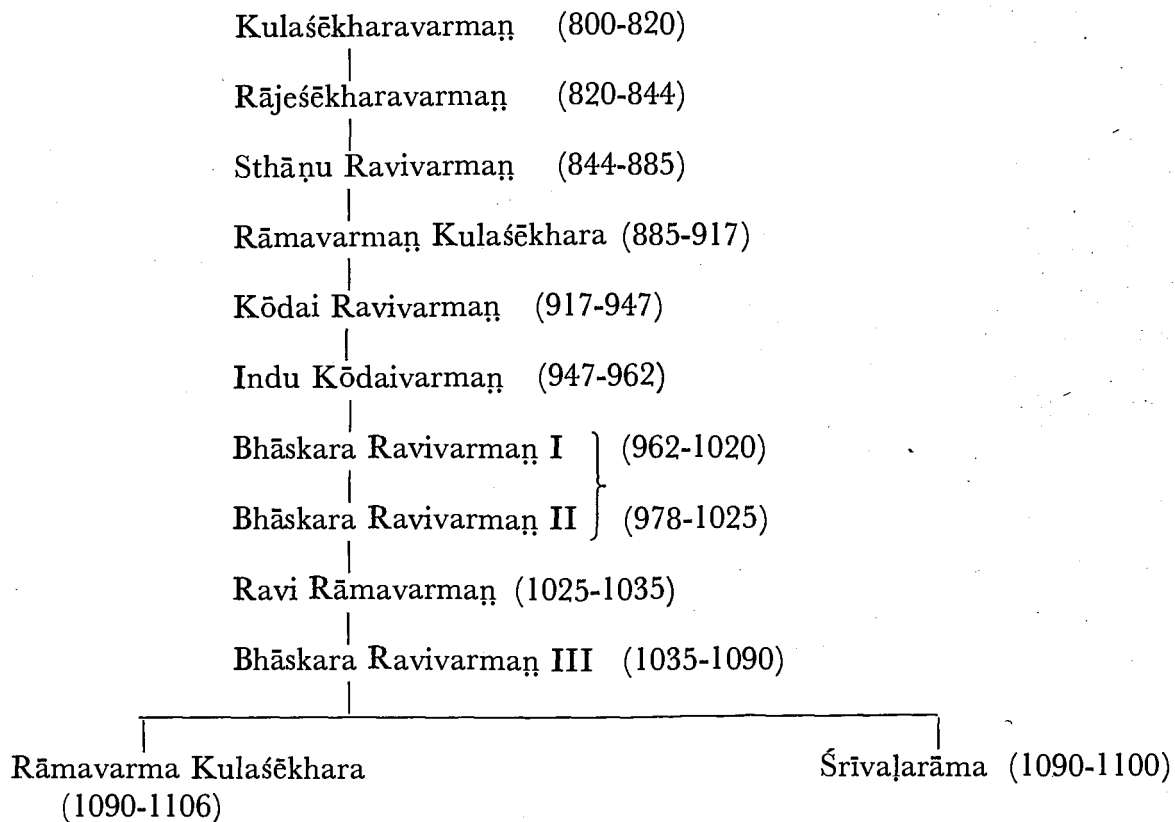
Before we close this section it is necessary to have a few words about the intermittent Chēra-Chōḷa conflict that continued for a century or so. Rājarāja's attack in the early years of his reign on Vilinjam and Kāṇḍalūr-śālai signalled the beginning of this belligerent posture. The policy was brought to a successful conclusion by his son Rājendra Chōḷa I, whose army under the leadership of his son Rājādhirāja, won a decisive victory over the Chēras in the sixth regnal year (A.D. 1017). Towards the latter part of Rājendra's reign, there was rebellion in Kerala and it was quelled ruthlessly by Rājādhirāja. Other Chōḷa rulers like Vīra-Rājendra and Kulōttuṅga I also undertook punitive expedition to Kerala.

The long-drawn conflict doubtless brought disruption in the maritime trade, which was gradually diverted to the Coromandal coast to the advantage of the merchant community of the Chōḷa country. Decline in trade and agriculture brought economic stagnation and the only class that derived some benefit out of this chaos was the Nambūdiri Brāhmaṇas who established their supremacy over the entire social order. They also exercised considerable control over the economic affairs of the region. Some scholars hold the view that this Chēra-Chōḷa conflict had even affected the social structure of the Malayalam people. For example, it is claimed that the matrilineal system of inheritance in Kerala was the outcome of this disturbed situation arising out of this intermittent conflict.² From the point of the present study, the most important development is the rise of the Nambūdiris as a powerful section of the society. This alone explains why this unfavourable political atmosphere did not materially affect the temple-raising activity in Kerala, a fact which can be confirmed by the occurrence of countless donatory temple-inscriptions belonging to this phase.

¹ One Kō-Kōdai-Kōdai is known from the Kavandra stone-inscription in District Quilon. It is dated in the fourth regnal year and records the gift of land by certain Śēndaṇ to the Mūttār and Iḷaiyār of Kāvu for lamps, worship and Śrī-bali. See, *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy* 1936-37, no. 285.

² Kunjan Pillai (1970), *op. cit.*, pp. 292-323. He seems to have stretched his point too far in depicting the grim battle between the two ancient dynasties. See K. K. Pillay, 'The matrilineal system of inheritance in Kerala', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, I, pts, 2 & 3 (1974), pp. 181-88.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE CHĒRAS



D. THE MŪSHIKAS

The early history of the Mūshikas of north Malabar is still wrapped in legends recorded in the *Mūshika-vamśam*, a Sanskrit epic of about the eleventh century, composed by Atula, the court-poet of the Mūshika king Śrīkaṇṭha.¹ A glance through the pages of this work will convince anyone about the zeal the Mūshika rulers displayed in repairs and construction of Brāhmaṇical temples. It will not be out of place to cite here a few such instances from the *Mūshika-vamśam*. For example, Nandinī, the Chēdi princess and wife of the Mūshika king Īśānavarman, devoted herself to the worship of the goddess Chaṇḍikā. Īśānavarman himself is said to have set up a number of figures of Śiva in various temples. Another king Kundavarman built a town Nārāyaṇapura in honour of Viṣṇu. One Vaḷabha of this dynasty paid a visit to Chellūra, then a great centre of Brāhmaṇical learning. Sāmbharapura, identified with modern Tricchambaram, near Taliparamba, in District Cannanore, had a famous temple of Viṣṇu, where Vaḷabha offered his obeisance. He also went to the Śiva temple there alleged to have been built by Satasōma, one of his distant ancestors, and offered worship. On the representation of the Brāhmaṇas, he ordered

¹ 'Extracts from the *Mūshika-vamśam*', in *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 87-113.

the repairs to the temple. It is noteworthy that Tricchambaram has at present the temples of Rājarājēśvara and Kṛishṇa, both appearing to contain vestiges of earlier dates (below, p. 176). This patronage to Brāhmaṇical faith was not one of bigotry, for they followed a liberal religious policy. For instance, one prince Vikramarāma saved the monastery at Mūlavāsa from being engulfed by sea, while prince Vaḷabha offered worship in this Buddhist monastery.

The instances shown above indicate clearly their active interest in fostering temple-architecture quite early in the history of their rule over northern Kerala. But the history and chronology of this line of rulers have yet to be given a reasonable shape. The Mūshikas seem to figure in the Mahākūṭa inscription (A.D. 601) of the Chālukya king Maṅgalēśa (597-609) and there are three epigraphs, all of them being damaged, of this dynasty, which may be attributed to the eleventh century.¹ On scrutinizing the *Mūshika-vaṁśam*, it is found that the kings have been called therein Rāmaghaṭa-Mūshikēśvara or 'the lords of the Mūshikas descended from Rāmaghaṭa'.² Another point worth special mention is their close contact with the rulers of central India.

The *Mūshika-vaṁśam* provides only two vague references to some historical events. It has been stated in *Sarga* III of the epic that when the Kerala king Raghupati *alias* Jayarāga and the Mūshika king Īśānavarmaṇ (II) were in thick of the battle, Kēraḷa-ketu *alias* Gōda, the son of the Kerala king, intervened to make peace. Kēraḷa-kētu or Gōda may possibly be identified with Kōdai-Ravivarmaṇ, who ruled from A.D. 917-947. As the conflict took place before the latter's coming to the throne a date of *circa* A.D. 900 may be taken as one of the two determinants in the Mūshika chronology. The reference to the other historical event is in *Sarga* XIV wherein it is mentioned that Rāmaghaṭa Jayamāni deputed his nephew to assist the king of Kerala against the Chōḷa king who may be none else than Rājarāja the Great. The first military campaign of Rājarāja was in Kerala, and it may have happened before his fourth regnal year i.e., A.D. 989.

Surprisingly, no less than fourteen rulers intervened between the reigns of Īśānavarmaṇ and Rāmaghaṭa Jayamāni within a period of less than a century. Thus, on an average, each king ruled for six to seven years. Now, it also appears on the testimony of the *Mūshika-vaṁśam* that the succession was not always from father to son, since brothers, nephews, sister's son and other relations are found to have ascended the throne. It is likely that the eldest member of the Mūshika family assumed overlordship, while the other members ruled over different principalities in the Mūshika country. That this very procedure was followed is apparent from *Sarga* III: it has been stated that Nṛiparāma, also known as Ripurāma, was appointed the chief of Bhaṭasthali by Vaḷabha, who was succeeded by his younger brother Kundavarmaṇ. The last-mentioned king was followed by his sister's son Pālaka

¹ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy*, nos. 476 and 478 of 1926 and 523 of 1929-30.

² K. V. Subrahmanya Ayer, *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan*, IV (Coimbatore, 1969), pp. 129-41. He says (p. 134) that 'It is not improbable that the name of the country was Kuḍam, or Rāmakuḍam as distinguishing it from Kuḍamalaṇaḍu (i.e., Coorg Province), another southern territorial division. Further, it may be pointed out that Kuḍam is mentioned in Tamil grammars as the name of one of the outlying provinces where vulgar Tamil was in use; it figures along with Kuṭṭam (in Malabar) and Vēṇ (Travancore)'.

who had a very short rule, and after his death it was Ripurāma who came to the throne. After Ripurāma, the crown passed on to Gambhīra, the nephew of Pālaka. If this was the rule of succession it is but natural that the fourteen kings who ruled between Īśānavarmaṇ (II) and Rāmaghaṭa Jayamāni should occupy the throne only for a brief period. Thus the Mūshikas, like the early Chēras, adopted the principle of ruling the country by their own family group or, as Kauṭilya calls it, *kula-saṅgha*.

The Mūshikas of north Malabar must have played an independent role in the political history of Kerala even after their acknowledging the supremacy of the Kulaśēkharas. All the time, in the struggle with the Chōḷas, the rulers of the Mūshika dynasty aligned themselves with the Chēras. Naturally, they came into direct clash with Rājādhirāja; as a matter of fact, Rājādhirāja's historical introduction to his inscription refers to the defeat of *Irāmaguḍa-muvar* or 'the Elder Chief of Irāmaguḍa' (=Rāmaghaṭa). Two of the three known Mūshika inscriptions mention the king by the same title. But it is difficult to identify the Mūshika adversary of Rājādhirāja, though the internal testimony of the Mūshika inscription of one Kaṇḍaṇ-Kārivarmaṇ may well suggest latter's contemporaneity with Rājēndra Chōḷa in whose reign Rājādhirāja undertook the punitive military operation into Kerala.

The southern Mūshikas had their capital at Kōlam or Pantalayani Kollam near Quilandy, District Kozhikode while the famous Mount D'Eli or *Mūshika-parvata*, within their territory, was a geographical landmark of great significance. All the three epigraphs of these kings come from localities near about this conspicuous hill-feature, which was known to the Śaṅgam poets as Elīmalai.¹ And all the three epigraphs are records of donations to different temples. The ruined Chālappuṛattu-ambalam (523 of 1929-30) at Eramam, District Cannanore, gives the name of Kaṇḍaṇ Kārivarmaṇ *alias* Rāmakuḍa Mūvar Tiruvaḍi, who seems to have a very long reign as the inscription is dated in the fifty-ninth (58+1) regnal year. One Udayavaṇmar *alias* Rāmakuḍa-Mūvar is referred to in an inscription (476 of 1926) from the Kuruvakkāva temple at Kannapuram, District Cannanore (below, p. 175). An inscription (478 of 1926) engraved on the threshold of the temple at Tiruvadur is written in Vaṭṭeḷutta and Grantha. It refers, in the Sanskrit portion, one Perunṭṭaṇ and his brother Nārāyaṇaṇ Kāḷaṇ as the goldsmiths of the Mūshika king.

It may be mentioned here that the line of the Kōlatīri Rājās of later times was the descendants of this Mūshika line of rulers.

E. THE VĒṆĀḌU RULERS

Before Rāma-varma Kulaśēkhara shifted his headquarters from Mahōdayapuram to Kōllam or Quilon, Vēṇāḍu was a small chieftaincy perhaps owing allegiance to the Kulaśēkharas. Some stray references to this line of rulers are to be seen in the early

¹ K. V. Subrahmanya Ayer (1969), *op. cit.*, p. 136. According to him 'As a rule, the chieftains of the Deccan were lords of one or more divisions (*nāḍu*), possessed a favourite hill (*malai*) and a capital city (*ūr*). The principal hill of the Mūshika king was the Elimalai, his *nāḍu* was Irāmakuḍam and his capital Kōlam'.

Chēra and the Pāṇḍya records. For instance, one Ayyanaṭikal Tiruvaṭikal, the Governor of Vēṇāḍu, figures as the donor in the Tarisapaḷḷi copper-plate grant (now in the Kottayam Church) of the fifth regnal year (A.D. 849) of Sthāṇu-Ravivarmaṇ.¹ As already stated, the Māmpaḷḷi plate of Kollam 149 (A.D. 974) records some donation of land to the temple at Chengannur, District Alleppey, in the reign of one Śrī Vallabhaṇ Kōdai, who appears to have been succeeded by Gōvardhana Māttāṇḍaṇ figuring in one of the Trikkodithanam inscriptions, and in the Jewish copper-plate, of Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ, dated A.D.1000. With the advent of Rāmavarmaṇ Kulaśēkhara, who may be called the real founder of the Vēṇāḍu line of rulers, we get a fairly continuous history of the southern part of Kerala. The disintegration of the Kulaśēkhara empire no doubt allowed the local chieftains to assert their full independence within their respective spheres of influence, and of them, the Vēṇāḍu rulers occupy a place of pride in the history of Kerala. Quite a large number of inscriptions of this dynasty have been discovered. Even Kōdaivarmaṇ (1102-1125), the successor of Rāmavarmaṇ Kulaśēkhara conquered a part of Nāñjinaḍ (part of Kanyakumari District) from the Pāṇḍyas. But in the latter half of the thirteenth century Jaṭavarmaṇ Sundara Pāṇḍya (1251-68) and Māṇavarmaṇ (1268-1308-9) extended their sovereignty over Vēṇāḍu.²

As great champions of Brāhmaṇical religion, the Vēṇāḍu rulers were responsible for construction and renovation of many temples within their kingdom. Temples built in the ninth and tenth centuries needed thorough repairs, and under the active patronage of the Vēṇāḍu rulers, many such temples, as their countless inscriptions tell us, were given a new lease of life. Kōdai Kēraḷavarmaṇ (1125-1155) rebuilt the Padmanābhasvāmin temple at Trivandrum and also made gifts to the temple at Suchindram. These two temples received throughout special attention from various Vēṇāḍu rulers. Incidentally, quite a number of epigraphs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries throw light on the special rules framed for the management of temples. All this indicates Nambūdiri Brāhmaṇas assuming greater control over temple affairs and temple-properties.

So far as the princedoms in central and northern Kerala are concerned, the political history is all but haze and mist. It appears, however, from some inscriptions that a branch of the Chēra dynasty continued to be at the helm of affairs in central Kerala. For example, the inscription from Tirunillai, near Palghat, of about the twelfth century, refers to the twentieth regnal year of a Chēra king, whose name is now lost.³ Mention has already been made about a line of rulers who had possibly had their seats near about Indyanur, in District Malappuram. Likewise, the history of the Mūshikas during the twelfth and also the thirteenth centuries is not known from any source. But towards the end of the thirteenth century, the country came to be known as Kōlattunāḍ ruled by Kōlatīri rulers (Colaṣtri of European writers), descending from the ancient Mūshikas. Interestingly, the temple-building activity, despite a confused political picture, continued as before. Truly speaking, all other religions paled into insignificance before the rising

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, III, pp. 60-86. Also Kunjan Pillai, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-377.

² Sreedhara Menon (1967), *op. cit.*, pp. 159-68.

³ *Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy 1961*, no. B. 241.

popularity of the Brāhmaṇical doctrines though by that time Islam and Christianity had already had several strongholds in Kerala.

F. THE ZAMORINS OF CALICUT

From the fall of the Kulaśēkharas down practically to the end of the eighteenth century, Kerala, as is well-known to all, was constantly afflicted by centrifugal forces, which tore asunder the political fabric of the country. No less than fifty petty chieftains, always divided and jealous, reigned supreme in their small domains, owing no allegiance whatsoever to any central authority. Even the rise of the Vijayanagara empire in 1336 made but little impact on Kerala's polity. At the same time, socially and in religious sphere, entire Kerala was a single entity, bound by the same culture and heritage. 'The very fact that there were no kingdoms and states but only Rajahs and Chiefs, who had often rights and properties in other territory, helped the growth of an extra-political social unity'.¹ The temple-architecture of Kerala reflects the same unity despite much political fragmentation.

There was, no doubt, a landed aristocracy but the Brāhmaṇas as custodians of ever-growing temple properties controlled the enormous revenues derived from land. Among the petty chieftains there were a few Brāhmaṇas as well like the Rāja of Iḍappalli or the chief of Parūr. Nevertheless, Kerala had the unique advantage of having a favourable external trade based on spices. Those Rājās who controlled the principal ports in their respective princedoms had an edge over the others in matters of political prestige and economic stability. Before the arrival of the Portuguese on Indian waters in 1498, three chieftains—the Vēṇāḍu rulers in the south, the Zamorin of Calicut in central Kerala and the Kōlattiri Rājās on the north—because of their control over the ports handling the bulk of exported cargo seem to have extended their vague supremacy over the neighbouring principalities. Of the three, the Zamorins emerged as the most powerful of the rulers capable of extending their sway over the whole of Kerala.

The Zamorins rose to power only in the fourteenth century: as a matter of fact, Marco Polo who visited Kerala towards the end of the thirteenth century was not aware of the existence of this kingdom. It is in the records of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1342-47) that one finds the first mention of the Zamorin, who soon developed Calicut into a major port of the west coast, even surpassing in importance Kōllam or Quilon in Vēṇāḍu. Calicut was a free port where ships from all countries enjoyed facilities and royal protection. Both the Chinese and the Arabs thronged in Calicut for trade, and in their commercial rivalry, the Zamorin threw his lot with the Arabs who helped the latter whenever occasion arose with ships, horses and also soldiers. At that time the Zamorin was considered the wealthiest monarch of India who had contacts with Arab countries, Egypt and even beyond; and as a port Calicut ranked foremost on the west coast shipping the bulk of pepper, cardamom, cinnamon and ginger. Undeniably, he had the required power and resources to bring about

¹ K. M. Panikkar (1960), *op. cit.*, p. 26.

a unification of Kerala, but he failed to pursue a vigorous policy towards this goal because of two reasons: the rise of Cochin and the arrival of the Portuguese on Indian scene.

G. CONTACT WITH EUROPEAN POWERS

The rise of Cochin and the arrival of Portuguese represent one and the same phenomenon, serving as the deterrent factor to the Zamorin's aspiration for becoming Kerala's indisputable overlord. After the flood of 1341 in the Periyar river, the importance of Cranganur as a port was on the decline; this flood created the Cochin harbour offering natural protection to ships during heavy rains. In about 1405, the royal house was also shifted from Mahodayapuram, near Cranganur, to Cochin as a precaution against the aggressive designs of the Zamorin. It was the emergence of Cochin that signalled a change in the traditional balance of power. Instead of three, now there came into existence four levers of power—Vēṇāḍu, Cochin, Calicut and Kōlattīri Rājās—playing their respective roles in the changing history of Kerala, soon to be dominated by ties of various sorts between the European nations and local chieftains, either big or small.

All the three major chieftains were in ceaseless conflict with one another, and the king of Cochin, though owning a rather small territory, was naturally drawn in to the political whirlpool. Notwithstanding the fact that he was a Kashatriya by caste, he had no right, as per social custom then in vogue, to wear crown, mint coins and hold ceremonial umbrellas over his head. On the contrary, all these royal prerogatives were enjoyed by the Zamorin, a Nayar by caste, and the Kōlattīri Rājā. The king of Cochin, being always threatened by the Zamorin's increasing power and interference, had almost had a precarious existence. He was, therefore, in search of an ally who could curb the might of his foe. Vasco da Gama's landing on the Indian soil in May 1498 was thus an unexpected boon to him and the other enemies of the Zamorin. The new situation shattered all hopes of political unity under the sceptre of the Zamorin; from then onwards he had been locked up, for over hundred years, in constant warefare with the Portuguese, much to the advantage of the Cochin ruler.

Vasco da Gama was denied the permission to trade in the Zamorin's kingdom, but the Rājā of Kōlattīri without much ado granted trading facilities to the Portuguese. Identical facilities were granted next year (1499) by the Cochin ruler to Pedro Alvarez Gabral, the Commander of the next Portuguese expedition. Their primary task was to capture the monopoly of the spice trade from the Arabs, and extend their full command over the sea-routes. But the inept handling of the situation by the Portuguese leaders at the beginning alienated the Zamorin who stood throughout by the Arab cause. Albuquerque, the greatest of the Portuguese governors in India, tried to reverse this policy of antagonism but it failed ultimately to produce any lasting result. Details of this conflict are well known¹ and hence, are not being repeated here. Nor it is relevant in the present context to recapitulate the

¹ K. V. Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut* (Calicut, 1938); K. M. Panikkar (1960), *op. cit.*, and his *Malabar and the Portuguese* (1928), and *Malabar and the Dutch* (Bombay, 1931).

well-known facts of the Dutch eventually ousting the Portuguese in their race for commercial supremacy, and the final triumph of the English in extending their sovereignty, overthrowing all other European powers, including the French. In the following paragraphs it is, however, proposed to give the basic trends of the period.

Kerala's intimate intercourse with various European powers from the sixteenth century onwards had far-reaching effects on social and economic conditions of the region. Neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch were able to build up an empire here. Even in the period of greatest splendour the authority of Portuguese was confined only to the limits of their respective forts, although they exercised political authority over Quilon and Cochin. The latter was virtually a Portuguese vassal, and the crown that the Rājā of Cochin wore 'was made in and sent from Portugal.' Their mastery over the Indian sea was also never complete: the Kunjalis, the hereditary Admirals of the Zamorin, kept the Portuguese fleet under constant harassment.¹ Indeed their saga of heroism constitutes a glorious chapter in India's maritime history. It is an irony of fate that the power of the same Kunjalis, which had by then overgrown, had to be crushed by the Zamorin in A.D. 1600 with the help of their arch-enemy, the Portuguese. The Kunjalis vanished from the scene but by 1664 the Dutch, who had secured a firm foothold on Kerala, gradually stepped into the shoes of the Portuguese. The sole consideration of the Dutch, who had certainly had a far better administrative set-up than the Portuguese, was to obtain 'the greatest share in the pepper trade at minimum cost.' Nevertheless, it was not easy for the Dutch to have complete monopoly of the pepper trade as the English and the French had by that time appeared on the scene. Yet the Dutch relations with the Malabar, unlike that of the Portuguese, were never marred by massacre and savage atrocities.

Economically, the Portuguese and the Dutch relations with Kerala brought prosperity through direct export of spices, coir and other products. Due to profitable export trade, the pattern of cultivation also underwent some change. The economic solvency of the region as a whole had its tangible expression in various arts and crafts, in building or renovating temples, mosques, churches, synagogues, forts, palaces and so on. A few temples must have been plundered by the Portuguese, but that was motivated more by cupidity than bigotry. By and large, the Hindu community pursued religious affairs unhindered, since most of the population lived a quiet poorman's life under benevolent despotism of petty Hindu kings.

The Portuguese policy of conversion to Christianity had a limited success. Christianity, like Judaism and Islam, had its moorings in Kerala, and the arrival of the Portuguese and Latin Church created problems for the local Syrian Christians. In spite of the fact that the local Christians had been enjoying all facilities and protection from the local Rājā, they tried at first to join hands with the Portuguese, who, however, treated them as nothing short of heretics. There were attempts to bring the two churches under one authority but the success was partial; subsequently, the Malabar Church itself was faced with a schism. Anyway, those who embraced Christianity under the patronage of

¹ O. K. Nambiar, *The Kunjalis* (Bombay, 1963).

the Roman Catholic Church stayed inside the fortress and enjoyed equal rights and privileges as their white compeers. This religious policy helped indirectly an undisturbed growth of the temple-architecture and its concomitant arts, assiduously cultivated by the local Rājās and the powerful Brāhmaṇa community. In this power-structure, politics seems to have played a subdued role compared to economic considerations, social needs and over-riding religious faith.

H. THE VIJAYANAGARA RULERS AND THE NĀYAKAS

Though encircled by the Vijayanagara empire the Malabar coast remained virtually free from its political influences. Only Vēṇāḍu among the Kerala rulers had to bear the brunt of the Vijaynagara attack when Bhūtalavīra-Śrī Vīra Udaya Mārttāṇḍa Varma (1516-1535) was on the throne; he was defeated by an army of the Vijayanagara emperor Achyuta Rāya. In this struggle, Nāñjināḍ was the bone of contention, and the situation remained unaltered even with Nāyakas. Tirumala Nāyaka of Madurai, in 1634, invaded Nāñjināḍ not merely to loot wealth but also to subjugate the Vēṇāḍu ruler Ravi Varma (1611-1663). For about half a century, Nāñjināḍ remained under the mercy of Tirumala Nāyaka, who ravaged the region several times to let loose an anarchy. Parts of north Kerala passed into the hands of the Nāyakas of Keladi, whose Bekal Fort is one of the biggest in Kerala. They were staunch Śaivites but certainly not fanatics.

Despite all this turmoil in the country and rivalry among foreign powers, there were sure signs of growth in the fields of art, literature and religious ideals, which in turn influenced the sacred institution of temples. Now, temples were the centres of all activity—social, cultural and, to a great extent, economic. Various arts, like dance, drama, music, paintings, stone sculptures, wood and ivory carvings, metal craft and so on flourished centring round them. Evidently, a large section of people earned their livelihood pursuing such arts and crafts. In other words, the money earned through the external trade, which again depended wholly on agricultural products like spices, was spent on temples and their accessorial spheres. Many temples were added with impressive secondary edifices concealing the view of the principal shrine (below, p. 99).

In this period Malayalam literature was patronized in the royal courts and themes of various compositions were taken from the *Purāṇas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. For that matter, Kerala was caught once more in the grip of a new *Bhakti* movement spearheaded by great literary figures like Tuñchat Eḷuttachchaṇ (mid-sixteenth century), Nelpattur Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭatiri (1560-1646) and Puntanam Nambūdiri (1547-1640). Moreover, in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, Kerala witnessed the development of Kathakali literature. Influences of this *Bhakti* movement are markedly manifest on the murals and wood-carvings of innumerable temples. A few temples sprang up to sudden prominence because of the attention that they received from the exponents of the *Bhakti* cult. This was the case with the Kṛishṇa temple at Guruvayur, District Trichur, whose great devotee was Puntanam Nambūdiri. It was really a period of great cultural reawakening which came close to the heel of economic stability, prosperity of a few

merchants and nobles, and the cultural conflict between indigenous ideals and European trends. Yet the political face of Kerala remained unchanged.

I. RISE OF CENTRALIZED ADMINISTRATION

Some change in the political complexion of Kerala can be seen at long last in the eighteenth century with the rise of the two illustrious Travancore rulers, Mārttāṇḍa Varma (1729-1758) and Rāma Varma (1758-1798). It was Mārttāṇḍa Varma who, for the first time, pursued the policy of annexation in the history of Kerala. He raised one corps of foreign mercenaries after the other initially to crush the power of petty chieftains of his kingdom. Gradually he built up a trained army, supported by an efficient cavalry. Yet another great achievement was his complete victory over the Dutch in the battle of Kolachel (District Kanyakumari) on August 10, 1741. This enhanced his prestige in Kerala, and after a short while he turned his attention towards the north. But a new menace appeared in this part of the west coast in the form of Mysorean invasions led by redoubtable Haidar, and then Ṭīpū. Ṭīpū's name is still remembered with horror and he is blamed outright, in local traditions, for destruction of temples and vandalism. However, the greatest event of this period is the complete discomfiture of the Nāyar aristocracy: in Travancore under Mārttāṇḍa Varma; in Cochin under Palinh Komu Achan; and in the north under Ṭīpū Sultān. Various measures introduced by them brought into being the centralized administration breaking the shackles of feudal lords. Ṭīpū's contribution in the introduction of a modern revenue system in north Kerala has to be acknowledged and it was adapted also by the British who soon completely eclipsed the authority of Ṭīpū. In fact, the erstwhile District of Malabar came in the hands of the British by the treaties of Srirangapatna in 1792.

3. ARCHITECTURAL

A. INTRODUCTION

It has already been stated that there is no archaeological evidence of temples of the early Chēras in Kerala today, although the literary references cited in the preceding chapter (above, p. 7) do suggest the existence of some structures or hypaethral shrines belonging to that period. Mention has already been made about the role of the *Bhakti* movement in the emergence of a new phase of architecture in the south as a result of a concerted endeavour of the Śaiva Nāyanmārs and the Vaishṇava Ālvārs. They were like wandering bards, who travelled from one shrine to the other singing in simple, popular and melodious language the glory of the Lord and the efficacy of the Divine Love. Significantly, these hymnists never visited any cave-temple nor any halo was attached to such shrines evidently because of their recent origin. But it is no accident that the period of the *Bhakti* movement synchronizes with that of rock-architecture in the south, the latter being the manifestation of an urge to make temples of god lasting monuments of beauty and grandeur. To a certain extent, the new trend of architecture must have drawn some impetus from central

India where the Gupta monarch Chandra Gupta II excavated a few Brāhmaṇical caves at Udayagiri, near Vidisa, in Madhya Pradesh, in the first year of the fifth century. Nevertheless, south India certainly had already the tradition of using rock-shelters as retreats for monks. Such rock-shelters, ascribable to the period from the second century B.C. to the third century A.D., are common in Ceylon and the Pāṇḍya country. These are natural caverns transformed into shelters for the residence of Jaina monks in the far south and in Ceylon generally for Buddhists. Beds and pillow-lofts in these shelters, prepared out of live rock, and also sometimes vaulting of roofs and provision for drip-lines represent the earliest attempt in the south at the working of granite,¹ which was later extensively used by the Pallavas and the Pāṇḍyas in their rock-architecture.

B. THE CHĒRA ROCK-SHELTER

That some early Chēra rulers participated in the making of rock-shelters is confirmed by the inscriptional evidence from Puḡalūr, in Karur Taluk, of District Tiruchchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. One of the rock-shelters here has on its brow, just below the drip-line, two Chēra inscriptions of about the second century A.D. (above, p. 13). These two epigraphs, which provide the definite archaeological evidence, supplement, to some extent, the literary tradition. It will not be a digression to give here a brief description of these rock-shelters.

Altogether four rock-shelters—two big and two small—are located on the hillock called Āruṇāṭṭārmalai or Puhalaimalai at Velayudampalaiyam, a hamlet of Punjai Puḡalūr. Situated about two kilometers to the south of the Kāvērī, the locality is almost a suburb of ancient Karūr. The place is of vital geographical importance, for it is not far off from various fordable points across the Kāvērī: the traditional ferry-points are Puḡalūr, or Puḡaliyūr of inscriptions, Śrī Rāmasamudram or Ayilur and the one leading to Namakkal on the northern bank. Evidently, the region was open to various influences from Koṅṅunāḍu and several military expeditions from either side must have traversed the very route.

Of the four rock-shelters, three are on the southern side, and the biggest one on the the northern face of the hillock, crowned by a later Subrahmaṇya temple. The first rock-shelter, with two beds, has an inscription on its natural façade, besides the one incised on the right hand side of the bed, with a pillow-loft. Both the epigraphs refer to a place Nalliur, which may be the modern village of Naliampalayam, situated about 2 km to the east of the hillock. The main rock-shelter, with no less than a dozen beds, six of which are inscribed, is located to the west of the small unit. It has a clear-cut drip-line and plain façade, with two Chēra inscriptions, both in four lines, on the south-western corner. Of great historical interest is the mention of the establishment of *pāḷi* and the three successive Chēra rulers Kō-Ātaṇ Chēl Irumpōṟai, Peruṇ-Kaḍuṅḡoṇṇ and Ilaṇ-Kaḍuṅḡoṇṇ—in both the inscriptions.

¹ The earliest railing around the *mahā-chaitya* at Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, was a granite one, traces of which are still preserved in the form of uprights, some of them polished and also inscribed.

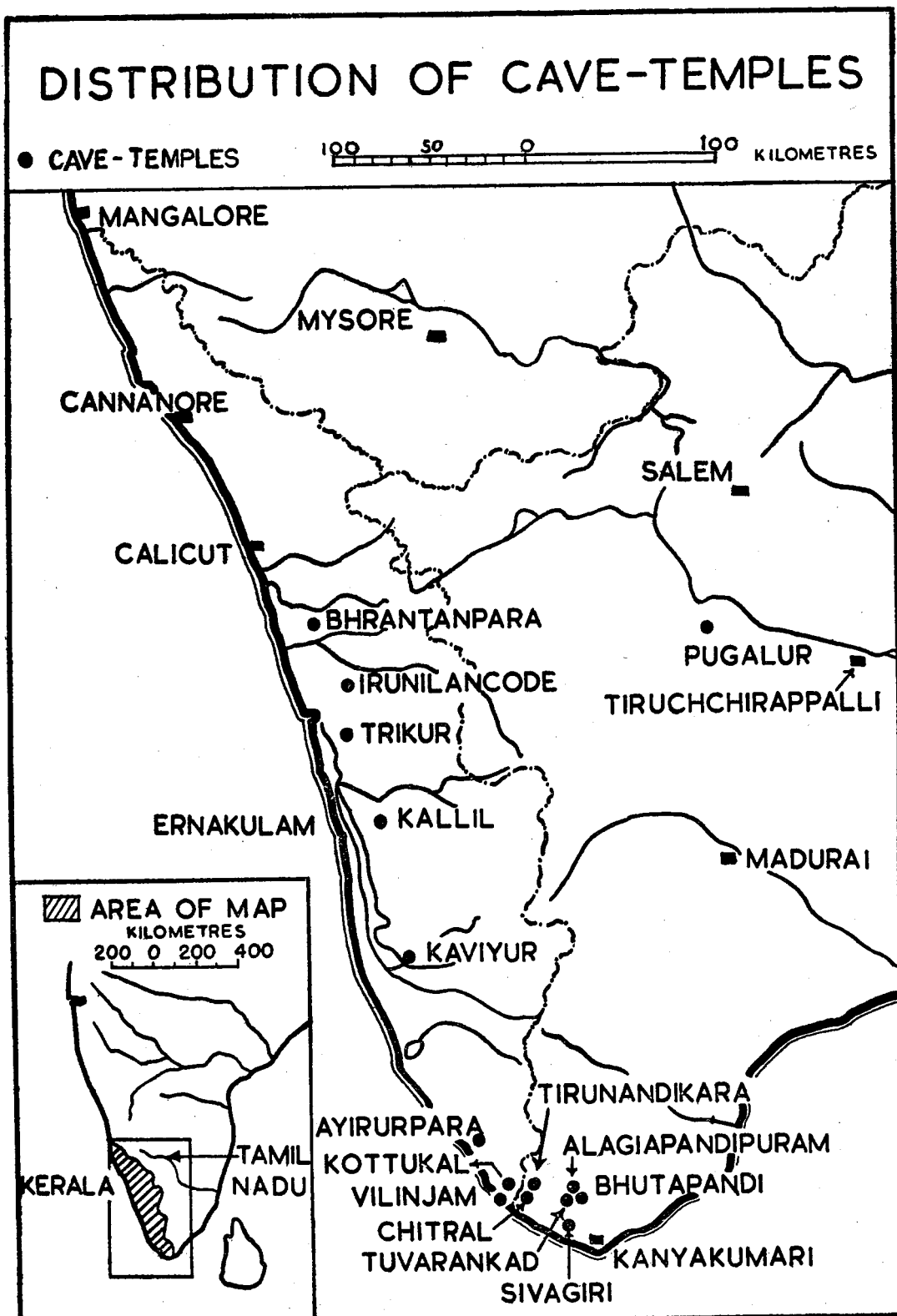


FIG. 1

It states clearly that the rock (*kal*) was cut (*arupitta*) for Chenkāyapan, a Jaina monk, by the grandson of Kō-Ātaṇ Chēl Irumpōrai. Inscriptions near the beds and pillow-lofts possibly provide the names of their users, and one such seat or bed (*adittāṇam*) was allotted to Chenkāyapan himself, who hailed from Yaṇṇur, maybe the modern Attur, about 10 km to the south-east of Puḡalūr. A similar inscription, of the second century, mentions of a goldsmith of Karu-ūr (Karuvur), the earliest epigraphical reference to the Chēra capital. There cannot be any doubt that the rock-shelters were the gift of the Chēra rulers to the Jaina monks, who hailed mostly from nearby places within the Chēra territory.

To the further west is another small rock-shelter with only two beds. Generally, these beds have an average length of 2 m and a width of about 50 cm. However, the biggest shelter is on the northern face of the hillock and, the original approach, as indicated by the cuttings of steps and foot-holds, was a difficult one. There exists a long common bed here with common head-rest, the latter divided into ten segments; five more beds are also to be seen in this rock-shelter. Thus, the Jaina establishment at Puḡalūr had arrangements for no less than thirty monks. In the light of this evidence it appears rather strange that the early Śaṅgam poetry has preserved so little about the condition of Jainism in the south during the early Christian era.

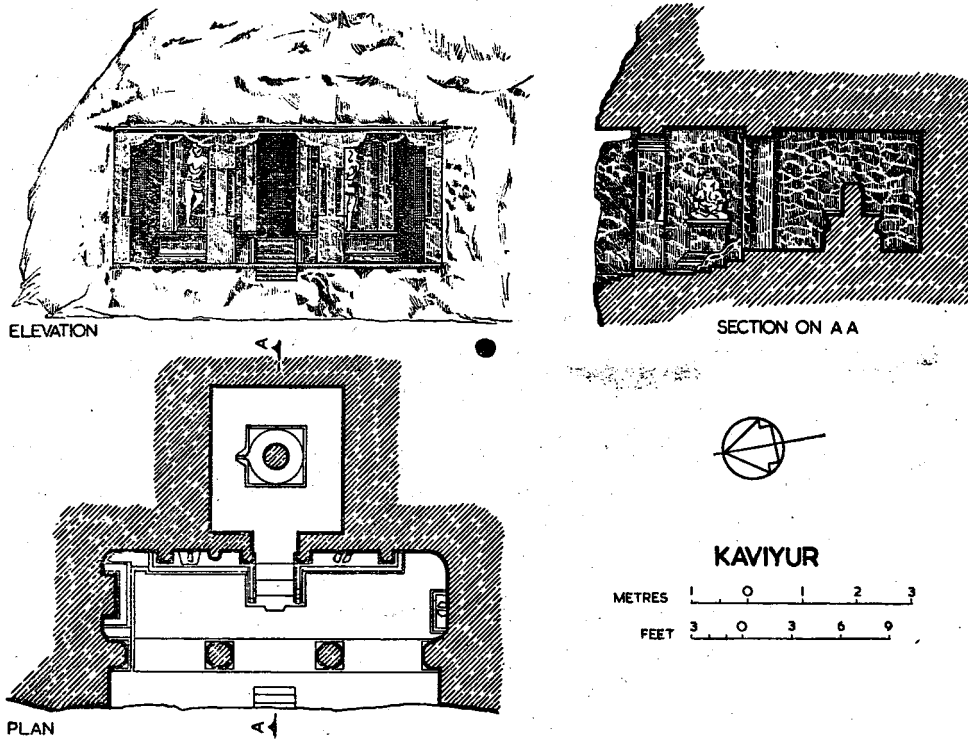
C. THE CAVE-TEMPLES

The granite rock-shelters were meant for monks to live in but there is no evidence to show that any such shelter was used as a shrine during the period. After a lapse of three or four centuries the vogue of rock-architecture in the south had its full and final efflorescence, and this time the primary aim was to make permanent abodes of gods. All the three big powers—the Chālukyas, the Pallavas and the Pāṇḍyas—were patrons of the new form of architecture. It was but natural that this strong drift, in the wake of contacts and military exploits, should spill over to Kerala and accounts for all its surviving monuments of fine workmanship and abiding beauty. Broadly speaking, these cut-in caves have two zones of concentration (fig. 1): the northern group occupying the Chēra country and the southern group located in the ancient Āy territory. But the geographical location in the respective territories has no bearing on the authorship of the caves, because so far there is no evidence, as will be shown below, that may justify any attempt at attributing these caves to the Chēras, and much less to the Āy-vēls.¹

The southern group consists of the caves located variously at Viliṇjam, the capital of the later Āys, and Ayirurpara, in District Trivandrum, Kottukal, in District Quilon, and Kaviyur, in District Alleppey (figs. 2 and 3). Some caves, now falling within the jurisdiction of Kanyakumari District like the ones at Tirunandikara, Bhutapandi, Tuvarangad, Sivagiri and Alagiapandipuram, may be included in the southern group of Kerala. There are only three caves known so far in the northern group—Trikur and Irunilancode, in

¹ A brief description of the cave-temples of Kerala has also been given in H. Sarkar's *Monuments of Kerala* (New Delhi, 1973).

ROCK-CUT ŚIVA TEMPLES



TIRUNANDIKARA

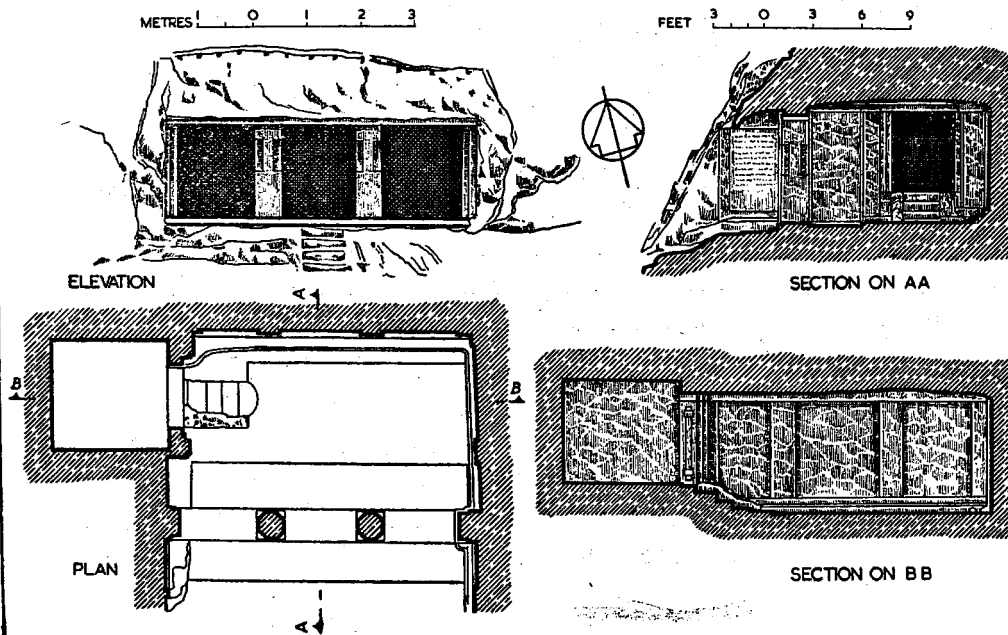


FIG. 2

District Trichur, and Bhrantanpara, District Palghat. So far as the southern group is concerned, it is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the Pāṇḍya and the Kerala groups; this is true both architecturally and in sculptural contents.

Of the rock-cut caves, the one at Kaviyūr (fig. 2),¹ dedicated to Śiva, is the best and a well-finished example in Kerala associated with delightful reliefs of a mature plastic tradition (pls. I and II). The cave-temple comprises a shrine with a *liṅga*, an *ardha-maṇḍapa* and a pillared façade, all arranged axially, facing the west. A flight of steps leads to the oblong shrine, with a rock-cut *liṅga* in the centre. Walls of the spacious *ardha-maṇḍapa* bear reliefs of the donor or chieftain (pl. I), a bearded *ṛishi*, a four-armed seated Gaṇeśa, which may be a later addition, and the *dvāra-pālas*. Among the bas-reliefs, the standing figure of the chieftain or donor is an excellent piece of art, and serves clearly as an indubitable link between the Pāṇḍya and the Kerala groups, because almost similar portraiture, having an identical headdress, occurs in the Tirumayam (District Pudukkottai) and the Virasikhamani (District Tirunelveli) caves of Pāṇḍya origin. Secondly, the *dvāra-pāla* figure at Kaviyur resembles closely the ones noticed at Sevvalpatti and Tirumalapuram, in the Districts of Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli respectively. Pillars and pilasters, with octagonal middle part (*kaṭṭu*) in between the parts with square section (*śaduram*), have corbels with series of volutes (pl. I), recalling the Chālukyan tradition. Even the Atiya rulers, in their excavations of the Namakkal caves, in District Salem, made use of the identical type of corbels, which indeed differs from the Pallava variety.

Like the cave-temple at Kaviyur, the one at Ayirurpara (District Trivandrum), excavated at the mid-height of the hill, has an oblong shrine with a rock-cut *liṅga*, an *ardha-maṇḍapa* and a pillared façade, (fig. 3). Pillars are square-sectioned, carrying a corbel, with bevelled ends. Facing south-west, the cave has the unfinished reliefs of two *dvāra-pālas*; one of them stands in the same pose as that of Kaviyur. The standing four-armed figures of Viṣṇu and seated Gaṇapati appear to be later in date than the period of the main excavation.

Another important excavation, with an unusual ground-plan, is the cave-temple at Tirunandikara (District Kanyakumari) (fig. 2). The oblong shrine, having its own flight of steps, faces east, but occupies the western end of the excavation, which, however, faces the south. It has also an *ardha-maṇḍapa*, with a pillared façade, and a rudimentary *mahā-maṇḍapa*. Pillars, one of them bearing an inscription of the latter half of the eighth century,² have octagonal *kaṭṭu* in between the square *śadurams*. Like Ayirurpara, and a number of cave-temples in the proper Pāṇḍya country, its corbels are of the bevelled type. Again, the plan of the Tirunandikara cave is comparable in every respect to that of the Umaiyaṇḍār cave at Tirupparangunram (District Madurai) and the Satyavāgīśvara cave

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, V, pp. 1-6.

² There are four inscriptions in all in this rock-cut cave: the one which refers to the ship-wrecks at Talaikkūḷam is dated in the eighth century; and the other recording some gift of land is ascribable to late eighth or early ninth. See *Travancore Archaeological Series*, III, pp. 200-206. An inscription of the eighteenth regnal year of Rājaraṅga I (*Ibid.*, I, pp. 291-92) and a twelfth century epigraph (*Ibid.*, III, pp. 206) are also available.

ROCK-CUT SIVA TEMPLES

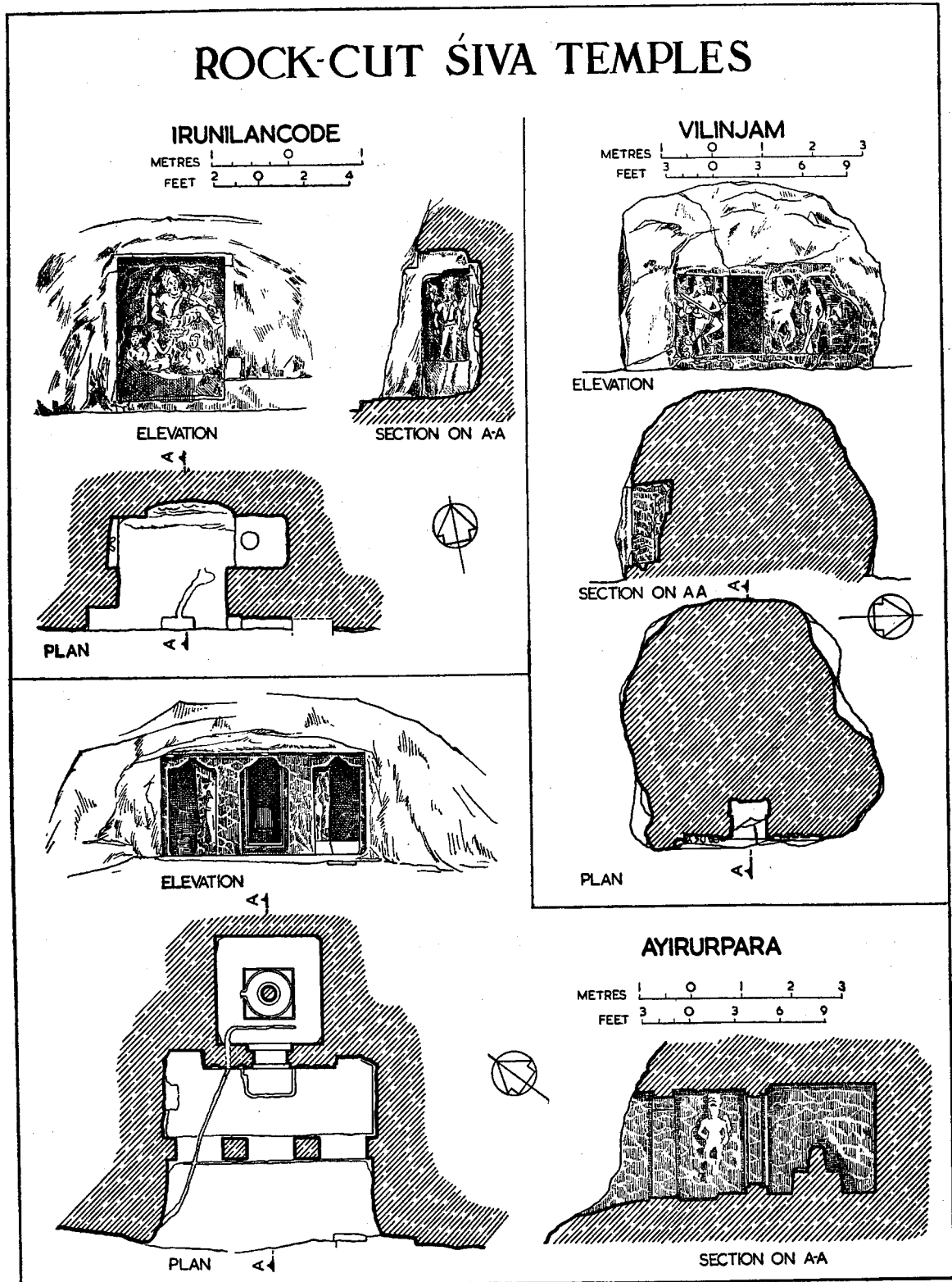


FIG. 3

at Tirumayam (District Pudukkottai). Originally, the Tirunandikara cave, like several other Pāṇḍya excavations, was painted in the interior, some traces of which are still extant.

All other caves in the southern group are examples of one-celled shrine, mostly enshrining a *liṅga*. Among them, the most important is the excavation, in a granite outcrop, locally known as Kottukal, at Viliṅjam (fig. 3), with its famous unfinished reliefs of Śiva as Kirātamūrti and dancing Śiva-Pārvati (pl. III A). The small cave-temple, facing the east, enshrines a loose sculpture of Viṇādhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Some scholars hold the view that the reliefs, of this cave-temple, with their slender forms and rhythmic lines, show Pallava affinity¹ but the Śiva figures of Viliṅjam compare well, in stance and graceful mobility, with the dancing Śiva of the Tirumalapuram, which is decidedly of Pāṇḍya authorship. All other one-celled caves, like the one at Viliṅjam, are simple excavations dedicated to Śiva and without any plastic decoration.

Two rock-cut caves, both facing east, at Kottukal (pl. III B), in District Quilon, belong to the Śaiva faith. Excavated in a very low outcrop, the smaller one, consisting of a shrine-cell and a porch, has in one of its niches a standing figure of Hanumān (pl. IV C), a motif occurring in the cave-temple at Kunnattur, District Madurai. The bigger cave, adjacent to it, is an impressive shrine, with a four-sided *garbha-griha*, fronted by an *ardha-maṇḍapa*, having a pillared frontage. Each of the caves is associated with a monolithic *nandi*.

It is evident from the above that the cave-temples in southern Kerala, like those of the Pāṇḍya country, were inspired by a Śaiva movement. But there is at least one cave dedicated to Viṣṇu; it comes from Alagiapandipuram (fig. 4), in the Tovala Taluk, of District Kanyakumari. Known popularly as Auvaiyar Amṇian-kovil, it faces south-west, and is an unfinished shrine-cell. On the rear wall of the cell is carved out an incomplete figure of Viṣṇu, in *samapāda*, with two upper hands holding *śankha* and *chakra*, while the lower left is in *kaṭi* and the lower right in *varada*. Almost identical cave-shrine, with Viṣṇu figure on the back wall, is found at Kilmaṇḍilangai in the Pallava territory. The bas-relief of Viṣṇu in the Alagiapandipuram cave is the product of the Pāṇḍya style of art, while the one at Kilmaṇḍilangai shares both Pallava and Pāṇḍya characteristics.²

Now about the cave-temples in the Chēra country. The rock-cut caves at Trikur, Irunilancode and Bhrantanpara, forming a group in central Kerala, belonged to the Śaiva faith. At Trikur (District Trichur), the shrine-cell, with *liṅga*, face northward like its two-armed *dvāra-pālas*, while the *liṅga-pīṭha* has been cut facing east. Two columns, with corbels similar to those of Kaviyur, form a regular façade, now obscured by later accretions. But pillared frontage is absent at Irunilancode (fig. 3) which contains on shrine

¹ Stella Kramrisch writes: 'A hitherto unidentifiable relief, to either side of the entrance of the cave temple of Viliṅjam though unfinished, has all these qualities. It would thus appear that the rock-cut sculptures of Kaviyur and Viliṅjam in the eighth century represent a local branch of the tradition made famous by the "Pallava" school'. See *The Arts and Crafts of Kerala* (1970), p.84.

² H. Sarkar, 'The bas-relief of Viṣṇu in the rock-cut cave at Alagiapandipuram, District Kanniya Kumari', *Damiliṅga* (Madras, 1973), II, pp. 12-18.

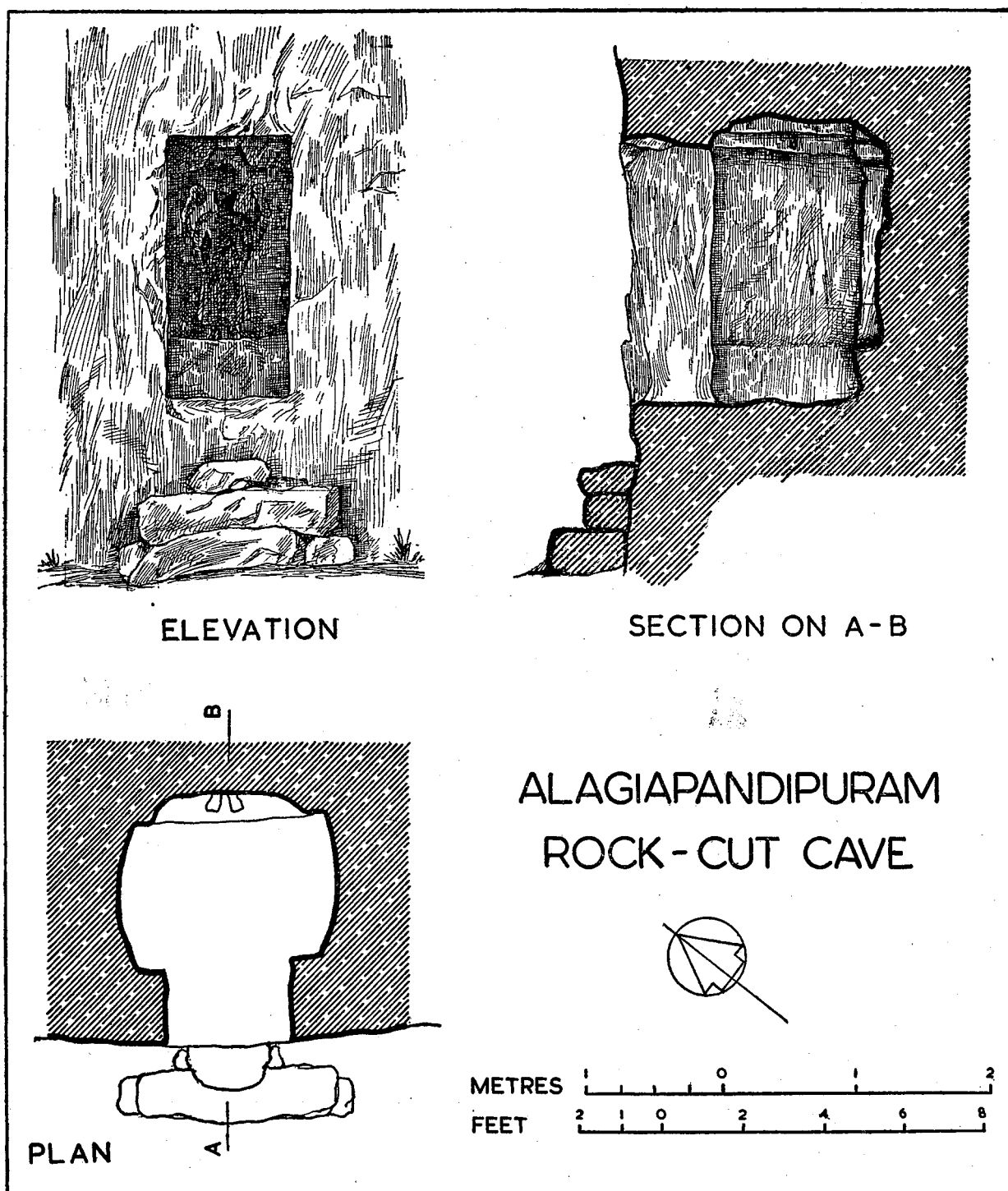


FIG. 4

walls beautiful reliefs of Dakṣiṇāmūrti (pl. IV B), Viṣṇu and Śiva, all reminiscent of the Atiya art-tradition. In the centre of the squarish *garbha-griha*, facing south, was carved out originally a *liṅga*, traces of which are still extant.

The evidence of the infiltration of Pallava tradition and technique into Chēra country is supplied by the incomplete example of rock-excavation at Bhrantanpara (District Palghat) which, due to its incomplete nature, is just a pillared façade, (pl. IV A). Columns of this east-facing excavation, carrying bevelled corbels, have very low heights, like the early series of cave-temples in Pallava country. As the cave had not been excavated to its full depth, it is difficult to surmise the intended plan, but square blocks on the vertical scarp, adjacent to the partially-excavated part, may tend to show that the original idea was to extend the cave further to the south. Anyway, the cave provides important information about the technique employed in excavating the rock-shrine. Here the Pallava method of blocking out the face of the vertical scarp into squares, bounded by deep grooves to be chiselled off subsequently, was adapted. The cutting out of the scarp, block by block, was no doubt followed in the early Pāṇḍya tradition but it seems from the unfinished cave at Tirumalapuram that the technique was not exactly the same as that of the Pallavas. Perhaps blocks in the Pāṇḍya tradition, unlike the Pallava practices, had varying heights, thereby giving an impression of a stepped surface, scratched by innumerable chisel-marks. None the less, the technique followed at Bhrantanpara is so strikingly similar to the Pallava method of quarrying that one cannot but assume the diffusion of the Pallava tradition in that region. Thus, in the cave-temples of central Kerala one finds the influences largely of the Pallava idiom although it might have reached through the Atiyas, whose excavations at Namakkal, and also possibly at Tandoni, near Karur, show a blend of the Pallava and the Chālukyan traditions. The very fact that the cave remains incomplete precludes its possibility of being a Chēra excavation, for the second Chēra dynasty ruled for three hundred years and had, therefore, had enough time for some king or the other to complete a project started by one of his predecessors. In the circumstances, the date of the excavations in the Chēra country has to be placed prior to the rise of the Kulaśēkharas in A.D. 800.

Caves in the southern group in the ancient Āy territory, except the one at Kaviyur, are in varying degrees of completion. But the stylistic resemblance of the sculptural art of this group with that of the Pāṇḍyas is so conspicuous, that the penetration of the latter tradition to southern Kerala must be taken as an established fact. Had the Āys been at the helm of affairs, the emphasis would have been certainly on Vaishṇavism, and not on Śaivism. Now, the Pāṇḍya rock-architecture reached its summit possibly during the time of Jaṭila-Pārāntaka Neḍuṇḍaiyaṇ or Varaguṇa I (c. A.D 765-815) although it had its beginning some time in the early seventh century as is evident from the inscription at Malaiyadiḥkurichchi,¹ in District Tirunelveli. Quite naturally, the artistic and architectural trends from Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam might have reached the neighbouring country any time from the seventh to the ninth centuries. Politically, the eighth century appears to be a favourable

¹ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1959-60*, no. B. 358. The inscription belongs to the seventeenth regnal year of Māraṇ Chēndaṇ.

period for the introduction of rock-architecture in south Kerala, when at least two Pāṇḍya kings—Kōchchadaiyaṇ or Raṇadhīra (A.D. 700-30) and Rājasiṃha I (730-65)—kept the Āys under their firm grips, and thus paved a way for close cultural contact between the two regions.

D. RELICS OF BUDDHISM

Buddhism seems to have flourished in Kerala mainly in the period of rock-architecture, even though its beginning may go back to a much distant past. Theoretically speaking, one cannot rule out some sporadic missionary activities in the region in the time of Aśoka. Kerala being open to sea on two sides, some influence could also have travelled down from Śrī Laṅkā. There exists a strong tradition here about the migration of the Īḷavar or Tīyar from Śrī Laṅkā to Kerala,¹ and this must have taken place at a very early date, at least before the rise of the Kulaśēkharas, since some of their early inscriptions refer to Īḷavar holding responsible positions in the administrative machinery.² It is not unlikely that the Īḷavar were a Buddhist people whose arrival in Kerala must have provided fresh impetus to this religion here. It has been shown that the plan of the circular Kerala temple, with a *garbha-griha* in the centre surrounded by rows of pillars, bears close similarity with the Buddhist circular temple known as *Vaṭadāge* (below, p. 71). What is more interesting is the discovery at Marudurkulangarai, near Trivandrum, of an image of Buddha bearing the stamp of the Anuradhapura tradition; the image has been dated to the seventh-eighth century A.D..³

A few images of Buddha come also from places like Karmudi, Mavelikara, Bharanikavu and Pallikkal situated in the Quilon-Alleppey region,⁴ once forming part of the Āy territory. Even chronologically, they belong to the period of the Āy rule over south Kerala, inasmuch as the aforesaid images have been dated on stylistic considerations from the seventh to the ninth centuries.⁵ In spite of the fact that the present evidence suggests the concentration of Buddhist sites in ancient Āy country, there is no reason to believe that the Chēras never allowed Buddhism to grow in their land; Vaṇji itself had a monastery, which according to the *Maṇimekalai*, became famous throughout south India.

Of the Buddhist monasteries in Kerala, the most renowned was the one known as Śrīmūlavāsam, identified generally with Tirumūlapādam of the Paliyam plates of the Āy king Vikramāditya Varaguṇa (c. 880-925). The inscription, which begins with an invocation to Buddha (Śauddhōdani), Dharma and Saṅgha, records the grant of land to the Bhaṭṭāraka of Tirumūla-pādam. A *viḥāra* of the same name (Mūlavāsa) is mentioned

¹ A. Aiyappan, *Social Revolution in a Kerala Village* (Bombay, 1965), pp. 119-20.

² As a toddy-drawing caste, the Īḷavars are mentioned in the Leiden grant of Rājārāja I. It says *ivu-ā iḷḷa teṅḡum paṇaiyūm Īḷavar āṇa perādāgavum*, i.e., 'The cocoanut and palmyra trees planted in this village should not be climbed by the Īḷavar.'

³ A. Aiyappan and P. R. Srinivasan, *Story of Buddhism with Special Reference to South India* (Madras, 1960), pp. 72-74.

⁴ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 115-25.

⁵ A. Aiyappan and P. R. Srinivasan (1960), *op. cit.*, pp. 72-74.

in the *Mūshika-varṁśam*, and by the time of the Mūshika king Vikramarāma, the monastery was about to be engulfed by the encroaching sea. By throwing huge blocks of stone, the king saved the temple from being submerged under the sea. Vaḷabha, who was deputed by Jayamānī to assist the king of Kerala against his fight with the Chōḷas, worshipped in the temple of Sugata or Buddha at Mūlavāsa while returning to his capital.¹ On the basis of these two references some authorities are inclined to locate the monastery in the Mūshika country.² But it is difficult to assume that the Āy king, who donated some land to the monastery, would extend his territorial occupation as far north as District Cannanore. None the less, it is apparent from the painting of Mūlavāsa-Lokanātha, illustrated on the Cambridge University Manuscript (Add. 1643) dated to A.D. 1015 that the monastery attained renown throughout India. It depicts the figure of a four-armed standing Lōkanātha, white in colour, with the inscription *Dakṣiṇā-pathe Mūlavāsa-Lokanāthah*. The Bodhisattva is shown accompanied by two attendants: Tārā with blue lotus, and Bhrukuṭi with a lotus and a water-pot.³

The above evidence clearly shows that Buddhism continued as an important religion of the area till at least the middle of the eleventh century, when Brāhmaṇical religion was on its ascendancy.

E. JAINA VESTIGES

Though the Buddhist vestiges have practically been obliterated from Kerala, there are to be seen a few Jaina monuments, belonging to the period from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries. Needless to say, Jainism received patronage not only from the Chēras but also from the Āys, the former, as we have seen before (above, p. 43), extending their support even during the Śaṅgam age. The rise of Jainism in the later times possibly synchronized with the re-emergence of the Chēras in the ninth century. In this period, as the inscrip-tional and literary data reveal, the Tirukkuṇāvay temple, located somewhere near the Chēra capital, was a great Jaina centre. Several Jaina temples seem to have sprung up on the model of this temple, where, as the tradition goes, Ilaṅgo Aḍigaḷ, the author of *Śilappadikāram*, retired after his renunciation. Unfortunately, no archaeological remains of the Tirukkuṇāvay temple has yet come to light, though Krishnan is inclined to identify it with the ruins of Godapuram,⁴ near Alathur, District Palghat. For the date of

¹ 'Extracts from the *Mūshika-Vaṁśam*', *Sargas XII and XIV*, in *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 87-105.

² Cf. P. C. Alexander, *Buddhism in Kerala* (Annamalainagar, 1949), pp. 79-86.

³ M. Foucher, *L'Iconographie Bouddhique*, Catalogue, Des miniatures et inscription du Ms. Add. 1643, Cambridge, nos. 25 and 27 and p. 105. Perhaps based on some imperfect information Gopinatha Rao referred to the discovery of an image of Lōkēśvara in Gandhāra. See *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, p. 117. And based on Gopinatha Rao's article many theories have been woven, and scholars like Aiyappan and Srinivasan (*op. cit.*, p. 73) have gone to the extent of dating a non-existent image to the second century A.D.

⁴ K. G. Krishnan, 'Tirukkuṇāvay and the inscription from Ālattur, *Journal of Kerala Studies* (Trivandrum, 1973), I, pp. 27-32.

the Tirukkunāvāy temple one may rely on the evidence of the Pudāḍi Tālakkāvu inscription of the tenth century, as it contains the date *nurraimpattelū* or one hundred and fifty-seven year of the deity of Tirukkunāvāythēvar,¹ thereby indicating the emergence of this famous temple some time in the middle of the eighth century.

Apart from epigraphical data, the Jaina monuments of Kerala may be grouped clearly under two categories: rock-shelters and structural temples. While the former group is still intact despite their conversion into Bhagavati shrines, traces of structural temples in original form are not many. Those in fairly good state of preservation are connected with the wave of Jainism that swept over Tuḷunāḍu during the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries A.D.

It would be a misnomer if the natural caverns used by the Jainas of Kerala are called rock-shelters, as they are bereft of beds and other arrangements peculiar to a resort. But the term has been retained as it has gained wide currency. In all cases, unlike their counterparts in the Tamiḷ country, these are associated with bas-reliefs depicting Jinas and their attendant *yakshīs*. The most impressive of such shelters is the one on the Tiruchchāraṇattumalai, near Chitral, District Kanyakumari. As stated above (p. 19), it is located in the ancient Āy territory and is associated with the inscription of the Āy king Vikramāditya Varaguṇa (c. 880-925).

The natural cavern is formed by an overhanging rock, with reliefs on one side. Apart from the Jina figures, there are a number of inscribed votive images carved by visitors hailing from distant places. Of the reliefs, the most important are Pārśvanātha and Padmāvatīdēvī, both standing gracefully and canopied by a multi-hooded cobra. Small seated figures, each underneath a three-tiered parasol, may be of Mahāvīra or other Jinas; they are all seated in the *sattva-paryāṅka* pose. The central niche contains a figure of Jina Mahāvīra, with *chhatratrayī*, *chaitya*-tree and two attendants. Another beautifully executed figure, standing elegantly in *tribhaṅga* on a *padmāsana*, accompanied by attendant figures including two children and the lion-mount, is undoubtedly Ambikā. All the prominent figures are accompanied by flying *vidyādhara*s or worshippers. Each of the rock-cut votive figure has below its seats short inscription in Vaṭṭeḷuttu characters, mentioning donor's name and place. These inscriptions also show that this Jaina establishment continued to exist till at least the middle of the thirteenth century, after which time it was converted into a Bhagavati shrine.²

There is a rock-shelter also at Kallil,³ near Perumbavur, District Ernakulam; in subsequent time, this was also transformed into a shrine for Bhagavati. On the façade of this cavern is carved an unfinished seated figure of Jina Mahāvīra. Moreover, on the back

¹ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1970-71*, no. B. 64. Pudāḍi is in South Waynad Taluk, District Kozhikode. But the inscribed stone is preserved in the Krishnapuram palace-museum at Kayamkulam, District Alleppey.

² *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pt. XII, pp. 193-94 and II, pp. 125-27.

³ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 125-27.

wall of the cavern, now obscured by the walls of the Bhagavatī shrine, is sculptured the figure of Mahāvīra seated on a *śimhāsana* in the *sattva-paryāṅka* pose; behind him may be seen two attendant figures, one of which holds a fly-whisk. Here also a three-tiered umbrella is depicted over the head of the Jina.

Almost contemporaneous with the rock-shelters are the ruins of a few structural temples, the most important of which is the one at Godapuram, near Alathur (District Palghat), known locally as Sākkīyār Bhagavati temple. The site has yielded two Jaina images, now in the Trichur Museum. The site, identified by some scholars as ancient Tirukkuṇavāy, is represented by a few buried structures and scattered architectural fragments.¹ The area looks like a low mound and there is every likelihood of structures coming to view if one proposes to excavate. In an exposed section there, one may notice traces of a granite structure, now buried, having the *adhishṭhāna* components like *upāna*, *jagatī*, *tripaṭṭa-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. A few pieces of *vṛitta-kumuda*, evidently belonging to some other shrine, are also to be noticed. All the structures at this Jaina establishment, as their mouldings show, were originally square or rectangular on plan enshrining seated or standing Jina figures. It is worth-while to give a brief description of the images recovered from the site.

The image of Mahāvīra from the site is shown seated on a *śimhāsana* in *sattva-paryāṅka* pose, with the customary three-tiered umbrella over his head; his *lāñchhana* has been depicted in the form of three front-facing lions in between the cross-bars on the pedestal. There is an attendant figure on either side of the throne-back, holding a fly-whisk in the right hand, and the left is in the *kaṭi-hasta*. The image is considerably defaced. The figure of Pārśvanātha, recovered from the same site is in the *kāyotsarga* pose, standing on a double-lotus *pīṭha* and having a three-hooded cobra over the head. Though the facial features are now defaced, it retains much of the original grace of its slim elongate form. The tail of the *nāga* coils around the *pīṭha* and then goes behind the thighs and back of the image. Stylistically the image may be dated to the ninth century, and the dating is somewhat corroborated by the discovery of the Tamil inscription in Vaṭṭeluttu characters of the tenth century, the reference of which has already been made (pp. 51-52). The date and the provenance of the epigraph as well as the sculptures clearly establish that Jainism was in a flourishing state during the rule of the second Chēra dynasty.

A Jaina temple dedicated to the eighth *tīrthaṅkara* Chandraprabha is situated at Palghat but its date cannot be ascertained in view of the wholesale renovation it had undergone in recent times. In front of the present temple stands the base of an earlier shrine, and like any Brāhmaṇical shrine in the far south it, too, has a *balipīṭha* near the entrance. It is worthy of note that the granite *adhishṭhāna* of the deserted temple is of the *mañchaka* type. A headless Jina figure stylistically ascribable to the ninth century can be seen in a photograph in the collection of the Archaeological Survey of India,² and the image must have come from this site. The figure is shown seated in the *vajra-paryāṅka* pose. Its modelling is

¹ *Indian Archaeology 1968-69—A Review*, p. 86.

² *List of Archaeological Photo-Negatives of the Madras Presidency and Coorg* (Delhi, 1936), no. C. 10 on p. 65.

more realistic than is generally met with in the south: the narrow round shoulders and the tender slimness of the body are reminiscent of some northern tradition.

It is commonly believed that many Jaina shrines in the wake of Brāhmaṇical upsurge were converted into Hindu shrines. For instance, the Kūḍalmāṇikkam temple at Irinjalkuda, District Trichur, dedicated to Bharata, brother of Śrī Rāma, was, as the tradition says, meant originally for Bharata, the son of the first Jina Rishabha and brother of Bāhubalin. The inscription of Sthāṇu-Ravi (c.884-885) from the same temple does not, however, say anything positive on this point. To say that it was a Jaina shrine prior to the ninth century is only a speculation. But the process of gradual transformation of a Jaina shrine into Hindu temple is surely in evidence at other sites: that it happened so in the establishments at Chitalar and Kallil has been stated earlier. This process can be traced in the case of the Nāgarāja temple at Nagercoil, District Kanyakumari. Here the pillars and shrine-walls have Jaina reliefs alongside the Brāhmaṇical figures. It appears that the temple continued to be a Jaina establishment till Kollam 687 (A.D. 1522) when it had received gifts from the Travancore king Bhūtalavīra Udayamārttāṇḍavarman.¹ Actually the reliefs of Mahāvīra, Pārśvanātha and other Jinas may be stylistically placed to the sixteenth century. Yet the two huge *nāga* figures, with five hoods, each sheltering a seated image, may be dated to the tenth century when Jainism must have been a thriving creed in the Āy country.

Now about north Kerala, the area contiguous to Tuḷunāḍu. Some authorities consider the rock-shelter on the western slope of the Edakkal hill, near Sultan's Battery, Wayanad, District Kozhikode, as a Jaina resort.² Though associated with a few inscriptions—the earliest of which dates back to the sixth century—and rock-carvings,³ the natural cavern here is devoid of any Jaina vestiges. Sultan's Battery, also known as Gaṇapati-Vaṭṭam, has, however, the ruins of a big Jaina Basti, which may be dated to the fourteenth century. It is an example of cloistered temple, built entirely of granite. In its axial arrangement, it consists of a square *garbha-gṛiha*, *ardha-maṇḍapa*, closed *mahā-maṇḍapa* and a detached portico simulating the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* of the Keralite tradition. Unlike the Kerala style of temples, it has slightly sloping stone-roof, with two inconspicuous domical projections on top—the one above the *garbha-gṛiha* and the other atop the *mahā-maṇḍapa*. In all probability, the original superstructure is completely lost. Originally, the temple seems to have been enclosed by a peristyle, in which columns having octagonal *kaṭṭu*, and square *śadurams* have mostly been used. The columns of the *mahā-maṇḍapa* appear to be more developed and their tapering shafts and decorations thereon are inspired by the Vijayanagara style. At present, there is no image inside the sanctum but the *lalāṭa-bimba* of its

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 127-28. Referring to the Ananta shrine, which was erected in Kollam 764, Gopinatha Rao says, 'the deity Pārśvanātha perhaps becomes at a later period the Nāgar Tiruvananthāvan, Ādiśēsha of Viṣṇu.'

² A. Sreedhara Menon (1967), *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

³ H. F. Fawcett, 'Notes on the rock-carvings in the Edakkal cave, Wayanad,' *The Indian Antiquary*, XXX (1901), pp. 409-21.

doorway contains a seated Jain figure; an identical figure occurs also on the lintel of the *ardha-maṇḍapa*.

Several decades ago, a number of fragmentary Jaina images were discovered near Sultan's Battery¹ but it is not known whether they belonged to the temple described above. One such figure is of a standing image of a *tīrthaṅkara* with the usual three-tiered parasol over the head. Here the hair have been shown in the form of small ball-like curls. A *makara-tōraṇa* of the Karnāṭaka type formed the back-drop (*circa* twelfth century or later). Amongst the finds may be seen several fragments of a tablet with miniature Jina figures arranged in a row: indeed they form part of a *chaturviṃśati-paṭṭa*. Most of the seated images, one of them having a lion in the centre of the *pīṭha*, are in the *vajra-paryaṅka* posture. Another Jaina site of north Malabar worth special mention is the one at Manjeshwara, in Kasaragod Taluk of District Cannanore. Undeniably, it belongs to the Tuḷunāḍu tradition, the basic trends of which may be described here briefly.

Jainism as represented by rock-shelters and a few structural temples in central Kerala must have been inspired by its development in the Tamil country. Innumerable bas-reliefs, also accompanied by inscriptions, on a huge rock-face at Kalugumalai, District Tirunelveli, compare in every respect to the reliefs of Tiruchchāraṇattumalai. But a later wave from Tuḷunāḍu must have entered northern Kerala during the thirteenth century. The earliest epigraphical reference to a Jaina individual in Tuḷunāḍu is in a damaged inscription from Mudbidri dated in the reign of Āḷupa king Kulaśēkhara I (*c.* 1160-1220).² In the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries all the chieftains, barring one or two, took up the cause of Jainism which then passed through its golden phase in the Tuḷu country. The Chauṭas of Mudbidri, Baṅgas of the Puttur region, chiefs of Nagirie, Hāḍuvalli-rajya, the Kaḷasa-Kārakala rulers of North Kanara, were all Jainas and participated actively in the temple-building activities of the period. Monuments of Mudbidri, Karkala and Venoor bear eloquent testimony to the unprecedented growth of this religion which bequeathed some of the best edifices of everlasting glory and splendour.

This very trend from Tuḷunāḍu must have entered north Kerala and was responsible for a few Jaina Bastis in the region. Incidentally, there still exist some Jaina settlements at places like Kalpatta and Manantoddy in District Kozhikode. The temple at Manjeshwara appears to be a product of such a movement though at present it is represented by a modern structure. Yet the cruciform plan of the temple is reminiscent of the *chaturmukha* type of temple at Karkala. Of course, the one at Manjeshwara was not of any grand proportions but the principal object of worship is still extant. It is in the form of a central shaft four faces of which are carved with the standing Jina figure. Stylistically, the images may be ascribed to sixteenth century. There are other Jaina images, either in bronze or stone inside the temple, and most of them have been collected from nearby places.

¹ *List of Archaeological Photo-Negatives of the Madras Presidency and Coorg* (Delhi, 1936), nos. C.6 to 8 on p. 66.

² K. V. Ramesh, *A History of South Kanara* (Dharwar, 1970), pp. 296-97 and 300-305.

CHAPTER III

ARCHITECTURE

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of Kerala's temple-architecture suffers from many a lacuna, for unlike the Chālukya, Pallava, Chōḷa and other traditions, it is hardly represented by any intact monument. Of the various parts of a temple, only the *adhishṭhāna*, *bhitti*, and to some extent, *prastara* escaped the ravages of time. These parts are made of stone, while the superstructure is built mainly of timber, which naturally needs periodical replacement or alteration. Many of the living temples of today had an early beginning but continuous process of renovation have impaired much of their original characters. There are, however, reasons to believe that the ground-plan of the vast majority of temples has remained unaffected, and in many instances also the *adhishṭhānas*. In certain cases, the *adhishṭhānas* bear early inscriptions, thus suggesting undisturbed condition or in the event of their undergoing thorough renovation, a faithful reconstruction. Examples of *adhishṭhānas* bearing inscriptions come from temples like the Vaḍakkunnātha temple at Trichur,¹ the Rāma temple at Triprayar,² both in District Trichur, the Subrahmaṇya temple of Karikkad-kshetram at Manjeri,³ District Malappuram, the Nārāyaṇkaṇṇūr temple at Ramantali,⁴ District Cannanore, and a host of other shrines.

Surprisingly, as the epigraphical data disclose, the period from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries saw the renovation of a number of important temples. That the famous Śiva temple at Kandiur (fig. 25) underwent renovation for eighteen months and odd days during the Kollam years 392-93 (A.D. 1217-18) is apparent from the inscription⁵ engraved on the *adhishṭhāna* of the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. According to the inscription, Rāma-Kōḍavarmaṇ, the governor of Oḍanāḍu, rebuilt the temple at the instance of Ravi Kēraḷavarmaṇ, the king of Vēnāḍu, who, in turn, was requested by a lady named Uṇṇika-lattiram, to carry out the necessary repairs. This repair became necessary after nearly four hundred years of its coming into existence. To cite a few more examples: the Bhagavatī temple at Tonnal, the Mahādēva temple at Kazhakuttam (pls. VI and VII; fig. 21), and the Śaṅkaranārāyaṇamūrti temple at Navaikulam (fig. 63), all in District Trivandrum,

¹ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1970-71*, no. B. 73.

² *Ibid.*, no. B.74.

³ *Ibid.*, 1959-60, nos. B. 235-37.

⁴ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1926*, no. 475.

⁵ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pp. 289-90.

were renovated in the Kollam years 654, 645, and 614 respectively.¹ During these occasions, the respective images were also reconsecrated after proper ceremony. The inscription from the Bhagavatī temple at Tonnal—Tiruttōṇṇal of the inscription—also tells that at the time of its major repairs an *iḷankōyil* or *bālālaya* was built at first to house the image temporarily.²

Major renovation apart, every temple has to undergo certain modifications or additions in the course of its existence. Here also a wealth of epigraphical data is at our disposal to find out this process of change. Indirectly such evidence may show the secondary importance of certain parts of the complex. For instance, the *dhvaja-stambha* was never an indispensable appendage to a Kerala temple, for it is absent in many important temples of central and northern Kerala. Sometimes a *dhvaja-stambha* has been added as late as the latter half of the nineteenth century. This is also the case with lamp-pillars: one lamp-pillar and a flagstaff were gifted to the Śiva temple at Vettikkavala, in Kottarakara Taluk, District Quilon, in Kollam 1025 and 1023 respectively.³ But the erection of *balipīṭha* or *balikkal* in front of the temple began very early (below, p. 93). As a matter of fact, it had become a necessary adjunct to a temple from a very early period. The Viṣṇu temple raised by Karunaṇḍaḍakkaṇ, the Āy ruler, at Perumpaludur has in front an inscribed *balipīṭha*.⁴ In the reign of one Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ, a *balipīṭha* was raised in front of the temple at Tiruvangur, in Karyad-aṁśam, District Cannanore.⁵ To raise a separate *maṇḍapa* above the main *balipīṭha* was, however, a much later development.

Inscriptions often refer to the construction of *maṇḍapa*, which may be taken to mean the *namaskāra*- or *archanā-maṇḍapa* in front of the temple. In Kollam 815 was built a *maṇḍapa* in stone in the Śiva temple at Trikkangod,⁶ District Palghat. An inscription from the Udayamperur temple, District Ernakulam, ascribable to the eleventh or the twelfth century, also records the erection of a *maṇḍapa* from the base to the top by one Nārāyaṇaṇ Ravi of Punnetritta.⁷ Such a *maṇḍapa* is totally different from what has been called in inscriptions as *tiruchurru-maṇḍapa* or *surru-maṇḍapa*, which practically encloses the front part of the shrine; significantly, the type is confined only to south Kerala.

Inscriptions even refer to the construction of platform around trees,⁸ paving of courtyards with stone slabs,⁹ construction of tanks,¹⁰ covering of the roofs with copper and so on.

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, pp. 34-35 and pp. 33-34; and I, pt. XVI, p. 299.

² *Ibid.*, VI, p. 35. The repair commenced on the 12th day of the month of Mīna in the Kollam year 650 and the consecration ceremony was performed in Kaṇṇi-rāśi on the 29th day of the month of the Kollam 654.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, p. 140. *Travancore Inscriptions* (Trivandrum, 1941) mentions the dates as Kollam 925 and 923. It is difficult to say which set of dates is correct.

⁴ *Travancore Inscriptions* (1941), p. 171 and *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1961-62*, no. B. 135.

⁵ *Annual Reports on Epigraphy 1901*, no. 16.

⁶ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1929-30*, no. 516.

⁷ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, pp. 63-65.

⁸ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy, 1926*, no. 473.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1928-29, nos. 449 and 456.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1926, no. 472.

It seems that the use of copper sheets over the timber-built roof began some time in the fifteenth century. The Kazhakuttam inscription of Kollam 645 mentions the covering of roofs with copper; the Śiva temple at Anakara, District Palghat, had its coverings in copper in Kollam 858.¹ Perhaps the earliest reference to it comes from the Janardana temple at Varkkalla, District Trivandrum, dated to Kollam 427 (A.D. 1252).² It records that the king of Vēnāḍu raised in stone the main shrine and had it covered with copper sheets, and also renewed the *mukha-maṇḍapa*.

The temple-inscription from the Janārdana temple at Varkkalla is very important from the point of view of the use of various architectural terms. Here the main temple has been called *śrī-vimāna* though the term *śrī-kōvil* has the widest vogue. Incidentally, a late Kannada inscription from the dilapidated Viṣṇu temple at Puthannangadi, Wayanad Taluk, District Kozhikode, refers to these units as *garbha-griha* and *śuka-nāsi* in conformity with the tradition of the Karṇāṭaka area.³ Nevertheless, the two main units, as it appears from the Varkkalla inscription, are *śrī-vimāna* and the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the latter projecting out of the shrine proper. This division is true for temples raised on square plan, for circular shrines are without such a component. For the names of individual parts of the *vimāna*, the evidence at our disposal is very meagre. The same inscription provides two names—*adhishṭhāna* and *uttiram* (*uttara*). Words like *gōpura*, *maṇḍapa*, *balipīṭha*, *prākāra*, and *dhvaja-stambha* have often been used. The term *kalaśa* for pinnacle is also an oft-repeated word but generally employed in connexion with phrases like *kalaśa-sthāpana*, which means consecration ceremony. Indeed, the placing of the *kalaśa* is the last ceremony either for *jīrṇōddhāra* ('renovation') or a new construction. It seems *kalaśa*, in such contexts, is not to be taken as an architectural term inasmuch as the term *stūpi* has been used for denoting the crowning member in the inscription from the Udayamperur temple (above, p. 57). All these terms are common in the *Vāstu-śāstras*, and they have been followed in these pages for describing the various parts of a temple.

Temples have no doubt been built by kings but the contribution of other members of the society was by no means insignificant. Actually, the majority of inscriptions speaks of some private donation or the other in the form of land, gold or money. The commonest gift was some land for maintaining a particular temple or for burning perpetual lamps. It will not be out of place to cite here a few instances culled from various epigraphs. An inscription from Kavundara of the reign of certain Kō-Kōdai (above, p. 31) records a gift of land by one Śēndaṇ to the Mūttār and the Iḷaiyār of Kāvu for lamps, worship and *śribali*.⁴ A gift of 50 *kalañju* of gold for burning a perpetual lamp and for offering of cooked rice by one Śēndaṇ Kūrṇaṇ is recorded in an early Sanskrit inscription from the ruined Śiva temple at Polpulli, District Palghat.⁵ An inscription from Angadippuram, District

¹ Travancore Archaeological Series, VI, p. 34, and for Anakara see *Annual Report on Epigraphy 1895*, no. 213.

² Travancore Archaeological Series, IV, pp. 151-52.

³ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1924*, no. 350.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1936-37, no. 285.

⁵ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1958-59*, no. 283.

Palghat, refers to the provision for food offerings and even garlands for the god Śrī-Kurukūrālvāṇ by one Iravi Kuṭṭaṇ.¹ The same record, ascribable to the twelfth century, also registers that the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas of Padineṭṭunāḍu and the residents of Muraṇottamaṅgalam were entrusted with the management of the temple. A sixteenth-century inscription from Kayiliyad records the gift of a sum of 5000 *paṇam* for construction of some buildings.² But gift in terms of coins was rare and specially absent in the early period when land, and sometimes gold, had been offered to the temple. Evidently, a temple had to maintain a granary for storing grains and treasury for depositing gold and valuable articles. As a result, a temple, apart from its management committee, had a number of officials and servants to look after its property and carrying out routine duties. In all probability, such temples were not generally privately-owned, though the existence of private temples belonging to a king or some wealthy person cannot be ruled out.

2. BEGINNINGS

It was the idea to have a place for public worship that led to the rise of temples, built generally by a collective endeavour, for the use of a community of people. Tradition has it that Kulaśēkhara Ālvār built the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram, District Trichur, and as he was the supreme monarch, it might have come up due to his sole effort (above, p. 21). Similarly, the Śiva temple nearby is said to have been built by Rajaśēkhara or Cheramāṇ Perumāḷ Nāyanār and his friend Sundaramūrti (above, p. 21). Whoever may have been the actual builder, its use was not confined to the family of a private individual. As these saints built temples inspired by the gospel of love and devotion, the *summum bonum* of the *Bhakti* cult, their primary aim was naturally to attract people to the edifice of a new philosophy and new social and religious outlook. When exactly these two temples were constructed is not easy to decide, nor is it possible to say, that barring the cave-temples, these are the only two buildings that ushered in a new era of Kerala's temple-architecture. But it is possible, as will be shown below, to fix up the date of the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram (pls. XI-XIII) on the basis of the internal evidence of an inscription recovered from the temple-site.

A Vaṭṭeḷuttu inscription engraved on a step in front of the central shrine gives the date as the 195th year of the construction of the temple.³ Unfortunately, the epigraph does not provide any corresponding date in terms of the Kollam era. But palaeographically the script may be assigned to the eleventh century, which takes back the date of construction of the Kṛishṇa temple to the ninth century or to the very beginning of, or even perhaps earlier than, the institution of the Kollam era. This very inscription furnishes indubitable proof of the existence of an organized system of temple-administration in Kerala during the eleventh century, for there is a mention of Taḷi or 'the assembly in charge of the temple'. The president of this assembly has been called Taḷiyādhikāri in the inscription. Another

¹ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1960-61*, no. 242.

² *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1928-29*, no. 450.

³ *Annual Report on Epigraphy 1895*, no. 226 and *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, p. 193.

inscription of the late twelfth century from the same temple also refers to *nālu-taḷi* or 'the four assembly'. To come back to our point, it has to be agreed that the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram came into existence by about the first half of the ninth century. The tentative date is so near to the period of Kulaśekhara Āḷvār that we are inclined to believe the tradition regarding the construction of the Kṛishṇa temple by the great saint. There is a Śiva temple closeby, but its date and authorship are difficult to arrive at. However, the Śiva temple at Thiruvanchikulam (pl. XX A) may well be the shrine said to have been built by Chēramāṇ Perumāḷ Nāyanār and Sundaramūrti, because there is ample evidence to show that the temple had an early beginning than the one located near the Kṛishṇa temple (p. 158). Moreover, there are signs of gradual growth of the temple-complex at Thiruvanchikulam with several sub-shrines coming into being in different periods of time.

A still clearer evidence about the beginning of the temple-architecture comes from the Śiva temple at Kandiur (pl. XX B), District Alleppey. An inscription from the temple is dated in the 123rd year of the God of Kandiur, which is calculated to be equivalent to A.D. 823.¹ This particular inscription does not give any corresponding date in the Kollam era but another inscription engraved on the base of the shrine gives the Kollam years 392 and 393 as corresponding to the 394th and 396th year of the God respectively. In the light of the foregoing, the beginning of the structural temple in Kerala, in the real sense, has to be dated to the first quarter of the ninth century when Kulaśekhavarmaṇ and Rājaśekhavarmaṇ were on the Chēra throne. The latter's successor, Sthāṇu-Ravi has a record, dated *circa* A.D. 855, in the Kūḍalmāṇikkam temple at Irinjalakuda, District Trichur (above, p. 23).

On the basis of sculptural art in stone, we may perhaps push back the history of the beginning of the temple-architecture in Kerala by a few decades. These are mostly stray sculptures found as discards in the precincts of the existing temples. Such sculptures come from Viliṇjam (pl. V) and Nemam (pl. XLI C), in District Trivandrum, Kodungalur (pls. XIV-XVI), in District Trichur, and Ramantali (pl. XXIII A), in District Cannanore, and include images of *Sapta-māṭṛikās* and Śāstā. Some of these sculptures are datable to the eighth and ninth centuries. For instance, the Kīḷataḷi Śiva temple, near Thiruvanchikulam, revealed images of *Sapta-māṭṛikās* (pl. XV) ascribable stylistically to the ninth century. An image, now much defaced, known popularly as Vaisūrimālā ('garland of small-pox') appears to belong to some *Sapta-māṭṛikā* panel. It may be a figure of Chāmuṇḍā assignable stylistically to the eighth century. Images from the temple-site at Viliṇjam and the one from the Nīramaṅkara temple at Nemam may also be attributed to the same period. Apart from these *Sapta-māṭṛikās*, the image of Śāstā from Ramantali, and the figure of Viṣṇu (pl. VIII A) enshrined in a subsidiary shrine in the Mahādēva temple at Kazhakuttam belong to the same chronological horizon. Even the metal-sculptures (below, p. 120), datable to the early ninth century, have come from Kerala. All this image must have come into being as an inseparable part of a shrine, thus suggesting the

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pt. XVI, pp. 289-91.

existence of some temple in the eighth century. Nevertheless, as no architectural vestiges—evidently they do not include the rock-cut ones—can be dated anterior to the ninth century, a date of *circa* A.D. 800 may be taken as *terminus ad quem* of the Brāhmaṇical temple-architecture of Kerala.

In this context it may be quite relevant to say a few words about the commencement of the temple-architecture in Tuḷunāḍu, for that will indicate that the date postulated above is not far wide of the mark. The Prasanna-Sōmēśvara temple, now represented only by its basement, on a low hillock known locally as Śambhukal at Udiyavara or Udayapura, near Udipi, is one of the earliest temples in the Tuḷu country. As a very early Śaiva centre it is mentioned in more than one Ālupa record of the eighth century. The manner in which this apsidal shrine has been referred to in the inscription of Ālugarasa II (*c.* A.D. 730-765) may indicate its existence even prior to his coming to the throne.¹ However, one of the two pilgrims' records on the bare rock-surface, near the temple-ruins, may also be ascribed to the eighth century.² Considering the epigraphical evidence, a date not later than A.D. 725 for the beginning of this monument may reasonably be inferred. No doubt, migration of some Brāhmaṇa population to Kerala must have taken place through Tuḷunāḍu, but south Kerala, being contiguous to Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam, and the central part to Koṅgunāḍu, some cultural contact with the present Tamiḷ country in the early years of the eighth century can by no means be precluded. All this demonstrates that there were some early structural temples somewhere in Kerala, when the rock-architecture was at its zenith.

3. BUILDING MATERIALS

It has already been shown that the rock-architecture of Kerala was the outcome of a granite tradition that infiltrated from the adjoining Tamiḷ-speaking area.³ On the other hand, the structural temple depended more on laterite, an indigenous building material. There are also a few granite temples in Kerala, those too, built in Drāviḍa style. Examples of such temples, irrespective of their chronological position, come from Parthivapuram and Munjira, in District Kanyakumari; temples at Viliṅjam (pls. V A and IX), two subsidiary shrines in the Mahādēva temple-complex at Valiasalai and a temple in the Janārdana temple at Varkkalla, in District Trivandrum; the Śiva temple at Netirimagalam (pl. X) and Kaṭṭilmāḍam at Chalapuram (pl. XXVI), in District Palghat; and the Pārthasārathi temple in Ananta-padmanābhasvāmī temple-complex at Anantapur Gudda, District Cannanore. There is a fine specimen of a small granite temple at Ullal, near

¹ K. V. Ramesh (1970) *op. cit.*, p. 63.

² Information from Chief Epigraphist.

³ It has to be borne in mind that linguistically both Kerala and Tamil Nadu constituted a single zone in olden times, and perhaps Malayalam as a distinct language began its career some time in the middle of the twelfth century.

Mangalore, District South Kanara. The area of sporadic distribution of granite temple in Drāviḍa style may even be extended further north with the inclusion of the Raghunātha Devasthāna, built in A.D. 1590, at Bhatkal,¹ in North Kanara. It is significant to note that such temples, however small their number may be, were raised in different times in this littoral of heavy rainfall. But the indigenous style of sloping roof, coupled with the use of laterite slabs as the main building material, reigned supreme in the realm of both civil and religious architecture here till the emergence of the Kanarese style of temple, to use the term of Cousens,² in the thirteenth century. In the latter type of architecture the sloping roof is made of overlapping granite slabs, but such temples, strangely enough, do not occur at all in the present political boundary of Kerala.

We do not, however, know of the existence of any temple built completely in laterite from *adhishṭhāna* to *śikhara*. Generally, the building material of Kerala style of temples made use of wood, mostly used in superstructure, blocks of laterite employed for constructing walls, and granite used for ceiling below the *śikhara* of the *garbha-griha* inside, *adhishṭhāna* and also for making door-frames, *phalakas* on either side of flight of steps, and *praṇāla* or gargoyle for letting out the lustral water from the sanctum. The widespread use of laterite as a building material so far as the south Indian architecture is concerned is by no means a distinctive trait of Kerala temples. It has also been used in the Konkan coast where there is an early cave-temple at Arvalem, near Goa.³ In fact, laterite is available in an area of heavy rainfall, and as an abundant raw-material it must find its way into any architectural tradition. It had its use also in Tamiḷnāḍu, as basements of some fallen structures in the Ādhipuriśvara temple-complex at Tiruvottiyur, near Madras, are found to have been constructed of the same material. Of course, it has to be admitted that among the regional styles of south India, Kerala alone excels in the use of this stone. In north Malabar, the *adhishṭhāna* and also the *prastara*, with intricate mouldings, not to speak of wall-decorations, have been made out of laterite. What is more noteworthy is the use of laterite in executing sculptures of consummate skill, as illustrated by the images in the *dēva-kōshṭhas* (pls. XII A and B) of the Kṛṣṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram (below, p. 104). Thus the evidence marshalled above points to a high pitch of development in the working of laterite in Kerala, which, as stated earlier (above, p. 15), has had a long history behind it.

It is worthy of note that a large number of temples in the Districts of Trivandrum and Quilon are made of granite, though carrying a timber-built superstructure. The region is contiguous to the Pāṇḍya country where the practice of using granite was deeply entrenched in the architectural tradition. Evidently, south Kerala derived this trend from its eastern neighbour. Another distributional factor of the Kerala style of temples is the concentration

¹ Henry Cousens, *The Chalukyan Architecture of the Kanarese Districts*, Archaeological Survey of India, volume XLII, New Imperial Series (Calcutta, 1926), p. 137.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 134-37.

³ On the basis of epigraphical evidence, the cave-excavation at Aravalem may be dated to the fifth century. See *Epigraphia Indica*, XXXVII (1968), 282-83.

of wooden temples in the Districts of Kottayam and Alleppey. In such temples even the walls are made of timber, bearing beautifully-carved panels devoted to various epic and *Purāṇic* themes. But the *adhishṭhānas* are built invariably of granite mouldings. The roofs are made of timber although sometimes covered with copper-sheets, which must have constituted an important item of import in Kerala's maritime trade. This practice was adapted even prior to the arrival of the Portuguese on Indian waters, because an inscription from Varkkalla, assignable to the thirteenth century, refers to the gift of copper for covering the roof (above, p. 58). Generally, the copper-sheets have been nailed with the timber-built roofs, obviously to protect the joints and stop leakage of rain water. It need not be assumed that all the roof-constructions followed the same technique. Sometimes tiles were spread over a wooden frame, the constructional method of which has been dealt with in details in various *śilpa*-texts like the *Tantrasamuchchaya*.¹ Some of the temples must have had only thatch as the covering material; and it will be self-evident if one cares to peruse through the pages of Logan's *Malabar*. This brings us to another type of temple-construction, which may be called roofless or hypaethral temples, references to which have already been made before (p. 7).

Lastly, a word may be said about the use of kiln-burnt bricks. As a material for temple-construction brick has been used infrequently in Kerala. For building the *garbha-griha* or its *śikhara*, bricks have been employed, the best example of which comes from the ruined Śiva temple at Tirunillai (pl. XXXVII A), near Palghat. A subsidiary shrine at Tenari, District Palghat, was built of bricks. But undoubtedly it never gained any popularity in Kerala largely because of the easy availability of blocks of laterite and timber.

4. TYPES OF GROUND-PLAN AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION

Ground-plans of the temples of Kerala and their distribution present an interesting study. Perhaps no other region in India—not even Tamilnāḍu—displays such wide variety of basic forms. In the Early phase, four distinct types—square, rectangular, circular and apsidal—were in vogue. Another variety, viz., the elliptical, made its appearance in the Middle phase, but its incidence is far too feeble compared to the other types. By far the commonest type of ground plan is square which has an even distribution throughout Kerala. Such temples are either *nirandhāra* or *sāndhāra* in type, and in the Middle phase, several evolved features, including the use of double circumambulatory, were added to the *sāndhāra vimānas*. So far as the axial plan is concerned, two parallel developments are clearly discernible : firstly, temple represented only by a *garbha-griha*, and secondly, that comprising the *garbha-griha* and *mukha-maṇḍapa*. The idea of diminutive shrine fronted by a larger *mukha-maṇḍapa*—a development noticed in the early Brāhmaṇical architecture

¹ *Tantrasamuchchaya*, paṭala II, 48.

of Nagarjunakonda¹ as well as in the early Chālukyan tradition—is totally absent in Kerala. Like the Pallava examples, many early temples here consist of a larger sanctum projecting out of a narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa*. This division is found not only in the exterior but also in the plan of the interior. In circular and apsidal temples, the interior may show two divisions but these are not discernible from outside. At the same time, there are a number of square *vimānas* in Kerala without any projecting *mukha-maṇḍapa*. The Śiva shrine, near the Bhagavatī temple, at Viliṇjam and possibly also the Mahādēva temple at Kazhakuttam in its early phase belong to this category. On the contrary, temples with *mukha-maṇḍapa* constitute the dominant type of *sama-chaturāśra-vimāna* in the Chēra country. In the Mūshika territory, the commonest type is the one without any *mukha-maṇḍapa* in spite of the fact that many temples in later times introduced this arrangement in the axial layout. The Rājarājēśvara temple at Trichchambaram (pl. XXII B) and the original plan of the Kṛṣṇa temple (pl. XXV) at the same place are examples without a *mukha-maṇḍapa*.

Generally, a square *maṇḍapa* with pyramidal roof, known as *namaskāra-* or *archanā-maṇḍapa*, stands detached from the main shrine. In Tuḷunāḍu, the same place is occupied by the *nandi-maṇḍapa*; some of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapas* in Kerala also enshrine *nandi*, provided the temple belongs to the Śaiva faith. Almost similar arrangement has been followed in the original layout of the Kailāsanātha temple, Kanchipuram. But the practice of building a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front of the early temples in Kerala does not seem to be a common feature, for its traces could not be seen in the ruins of the Śiva temple at Polpulli (below, p. 165) nor does it form an original element in the architectural scheme of the Kṛṣṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram (below, p. 154), Kīlatali Śiva temple (below, p. 158), or the Śiva temple at Tali (below, p. 160). As a matter of fact, the idea of *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front of the shrine with projecting *mukha-maṇḍapa* does not fit in well with the general layout. Even in the Middle phase, the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* failed to become an indispensable adjunct to a Kerala temple, since it is absent in the Dakṣiṇāmūrti temple of Sukapuram at Edappal (below, p. 193), District Palghat.

Rectangular shrines of Kerala have been raised only to house the images of the *Sapta-mātrikās* or the reclining form of Viṣṇu. To the latter group, belongs the Ananta-padmanābha temple at Trivandrum, and the Ādikēśava-perumāḷ temple at Tiruvattar, District Kanyakumari. Of the rectangular temples for enshrining the images of *Sapta-mātrikās*, mention may be made of the Bhagavatī temple at Viliṇjam (below, p. 141) and Angadippuram, the latter in District Palghat. Yet the occurrence of *Sapta-mātrikā* images at various places like Nemam, near Trivandrum, or the Kodungalur area, may

¹ Nagarjunakonda has yielded about a score of Brāhmanical temples dedicated variously to Śiva, including Pushpabhadrasvāmin Mahādēva, Kārttikēya, Dēvasēnā, Aṣṭabhujaśvāmin Nārāyaṇa, and Mother Goddess. See H. Sarkar and B. N. Misra, *Nagarjunakonda* (New Delhi, 1966). All these temples have diminutive shrine or shrines behind a pillared hall—a plan very much similar to those rock-cut shrines which are combined with the concept of *vihāra*. Of the Chālukyan temples of similar plan, mention may be made of the two main temples at Mahākūṭēśvara, Mālegitti-Śivālaya and Bhūtanātha group at Badami, Saṅgamēśvara and Virūpākṣa temples at Patadkal and so on. See Cousens (1926), *op. cit.*, pls. XXVII, XXXI, XXXV, XLV, XLIX, LX, etc.

tend to show the popularity of this cult, and consequently, the concomitant rectangular shrines. Still today it is an invariable feature of a Kerala temple but the anthropomorphic forms have been completely replaced by aniconic representations in the shape of nine cylindrical stones planted on an oblong slab; a late Kannaḍa inscription in Malayāḷam character from Aduru, District Cannanore, calls it as *mātrikā-bali śilā*.¹

It seems that the cult of *Sapta-mātrikās* spread from the Chālukyan country to Kerala through Tuḷunāḍu because the last-mentioned region witnessed considerable popularity of the cult. The images of *Sapta-mātrikās* in Tuḷunāḍu belong to two classes—the large-sized ones made of stucco or clay and the smaller ones in granite. There are at least two sites in Tuḷunāḍu—the Rājarājēśvarī temple at Polali and the Vīrabhadra temple at Udiyavara—where huge stucco figures have been enshrined in rectangular shrines. Without any doubt, the temple at Polali was built by one Vāsudēvaṇ in the tenth century, as a Kannaḍa inscription on the lintel indicates.² But the nucleus of the establishment there may go back to a still early times because the Polali inscription of the Āḷupa king Chitravāhana I (c. A.D. 680-730) states in clear terms that the Āḷupas were protected by the *Sapta-mātrikās*. The actual expression *avyāsus-sapta-mātarah* echoes practically the phrase *Sapta-mātribhir-abhivarddhītānām* of the early Chālukyan records.³ Anyway, the rectangular shrine built of granite, at Polali, enshrines several large stucco images, and the one with jackal as the vehicle may be identified as Chāmuṇḍā. The Vīrabhadra temple at Udiyavara houses the stucco images of Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī and Māhēśvarī, each with the characteristic *lañchhana* on the pedestal. On the other hand, stone images of *Sapta-mātrikās* at places like Koteswar and Ullal are without any *vāhana*; and these images on stylistic considerations may be dated to the ninth century and are reminiscent of the tradition of the Nōḷambavaḍi though the local idiom is markedly manifest on them. But the tradition represented by the stucco images is the survival of an earlier trend which possibly flowed into the Āḷupa country in the seventh century.

The prevalence of the cult of *Sapta-mātrikās* in Tuḷunāḍu will show that the rectangular shrine of the west coast, including Kerala, is certainly not a recent innovation. There is no possibility of its deriving it from the lower Drāviḍadēśa as the latter region saw the emergence of rectangular Dēvī shrines from the eleventh or twelfth century onwards.⁴ It is also doubtful if the rectangular plan attained any popularity in the Chālukyan country. Thus the possible source of the rectangular plan of Tuḷunāḍu and Kerala may be the architectural tradition of Gujarat where rectangular shrines date back to the Maitraka tradition.⁵ To cite another probable source of contact with Gujarat is the practice of placing the sanctum in the centre of the shrine surrounded by covered *pradakṣhiṇā-patha*, an arrangement common in Kerala as well as in the Maitraka

¹ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1935-36*, no. 110.

² The inscription reads as follows: *Karaṇaḍa Maṇḍirā Vāsudēvaṇ Iḍḍaṇ*.

³ K. V. Ramesh (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁴ H. Sarkar, *The Kampaharēśvara temple at Tribhuvanam* (Madras, 1974), p. 52.

⁵ J. M. Nanavati and M. A. Dhaky, *The Maitraka and the Saindhava Temples of Gujarat* (Ascona, MCMLXIX), figs. 13, 29 b and 35.

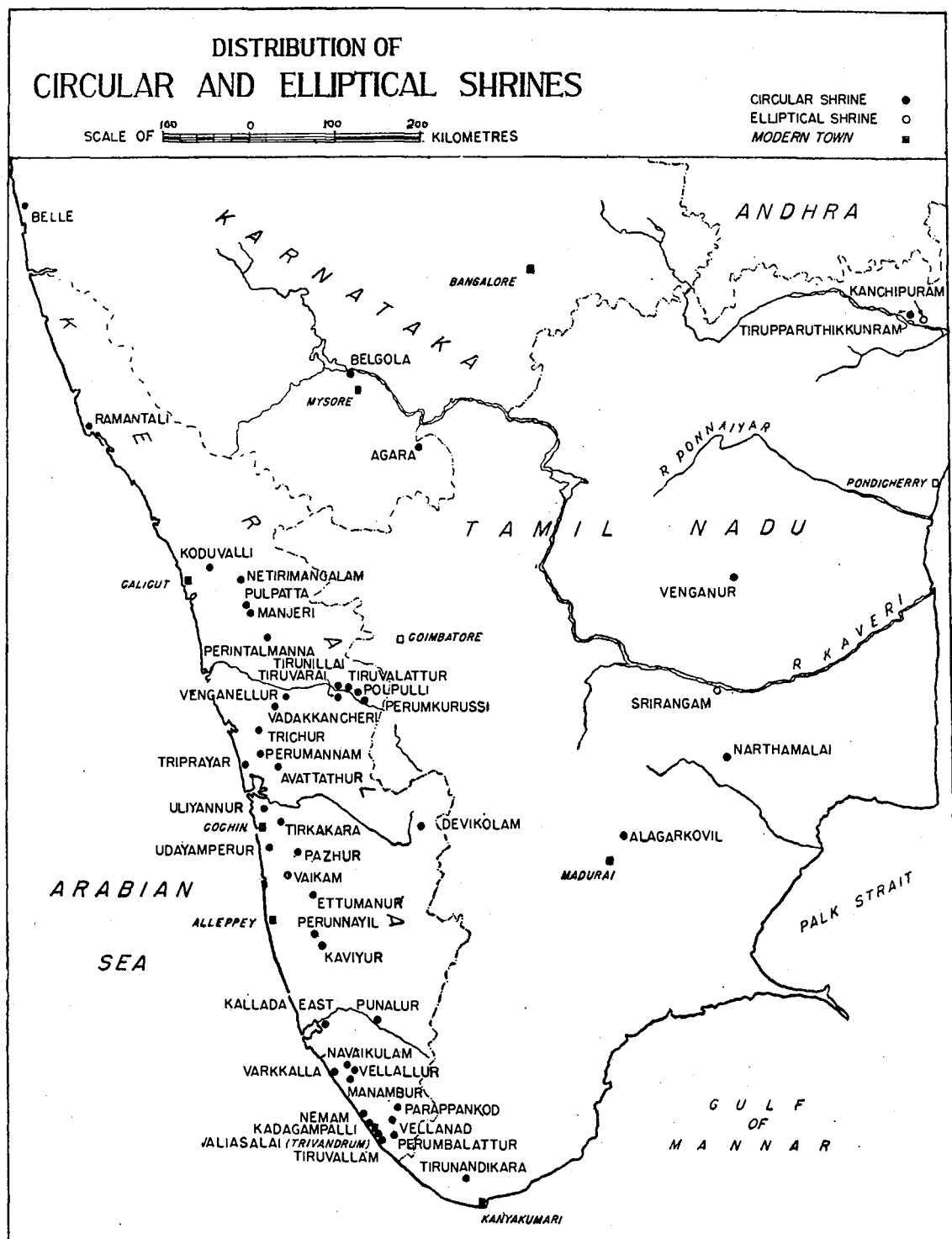


FIG. 5

tradition.¹ Seldom has any attempt been made in Kerala to transform the basic forms into ornamental ones by way of providing *ratha* or *bhadra* projections. The most common type of indentation provided in the ground-plan is by introducing recesses in walls and bringing them down to the lowest course of the *adhishṭhāna*. But this has rarely been followed in the circular or apsidal shrines. At the same time, the plan of the shrine-interior, particularly of the circular ones, is really rich in variety.

Equally significant is the distribution of the circular (fig. 5) and apsidal temples (fig. 6) on the west coast. Doubtless circular plan is common in south Kerala and shows south to north distribution. It is rare in Tuḷunāḍu and virtually absent in the Drāviḍa architecture of Karnāṭaka and Tamiḷnāḍu. So far only three examples are known from these areas: the interior plan of the Vijayālaya-chōḷīśvara temple at Narthamalai, District Pudukkottai, the Bhaktavatsala temple at Agara, near Mysore; and the Narasiṁha temple at Belgola, Karnataka.² A few circular Drāviḍa shrines like the Paraśurāmēśvara temple at Tiruvallam (pl. LXVIII B) and Valaya-Udayēśvara temple (pl. LXIX), Valaya-udaya-dichchapuram, both in District Trivandrum, are definitely inspired by the circular temples built in Kerala style.

Apsidal temples, on the contrary, follow definitely north to south distribution-pattern, with some concentration in central Kerala. On the Coromandel coast, apsidal shrines are rare beyond Tondaimaṇḍalam, but on the west coast they occur sporadically right up to Trivandrum. They are relatively common in Tuḷunāḍu; more than a score of them have been listed so far. The earliest extant temple of Tuḷunāḍu—the Prasanna-Sōmēśvara temple at Udiyavara—is also apsidal on plan. In all probability, Kerala derived the apsidal plan from Tuḷunāḍu which, in turn, received it from Āndhra and the Chālukyan countries. The apsidal plan of the west coast may broadly be divided into five sub-types, viz., (i) apsidal both internally and externally with width/length ratio of nearly 1:1½; (ii) semi-circular with width/length ratio of nearly 1:1; (iii) apsidal internally but oblong externally; (iv) apsidal externally but oblong internally; (v) the combination of (i) with (ii) as exemplified by the famous Durgā temple at Aihole.³ It is proposed to discuss here briefly the characteristics of each sub-type.

Most of the temples in Kerala are semi-circular rather than true apsidal in that their length is almost equal to the width. But in Tuḷunāḍu, semi-circular ones are not quite common, as most of the apsidal shrines have a length one and a half times the width. This very trend must have spread to Kerala, for the Ayyappaṇ shrine (fig. 31) in the Karikkad-kshetram at Manjeri, the Kālasamhāramūrti temple at Triprangod, the Śiva

¹ Nanavati and Dhapy, *op. cit.*, see figs. 15 (Bileśvara) and 16 (Gop). In Gujarat also temples may consist of just a *garbha-griha*. Where it is divided into *garbha-griha* and *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the former is generally, but not invariably, a diminutive shrine with a larger hall in front.

² *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department 1944* (Mysore, 1945), p. 33 and pls. VIII, 2 and IX, 3 and 4 for Belgola and *ibid.*, 1938, p. 25, pl. X, 2 for Agara. Also see H. Sarkar, 'The Gṛṇṭa-prāsādas of ancient texts', in *Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastri 80th Birthday Felicitation Volume*, pp. 270-79.

³ Cousens (1926), pl. XI.

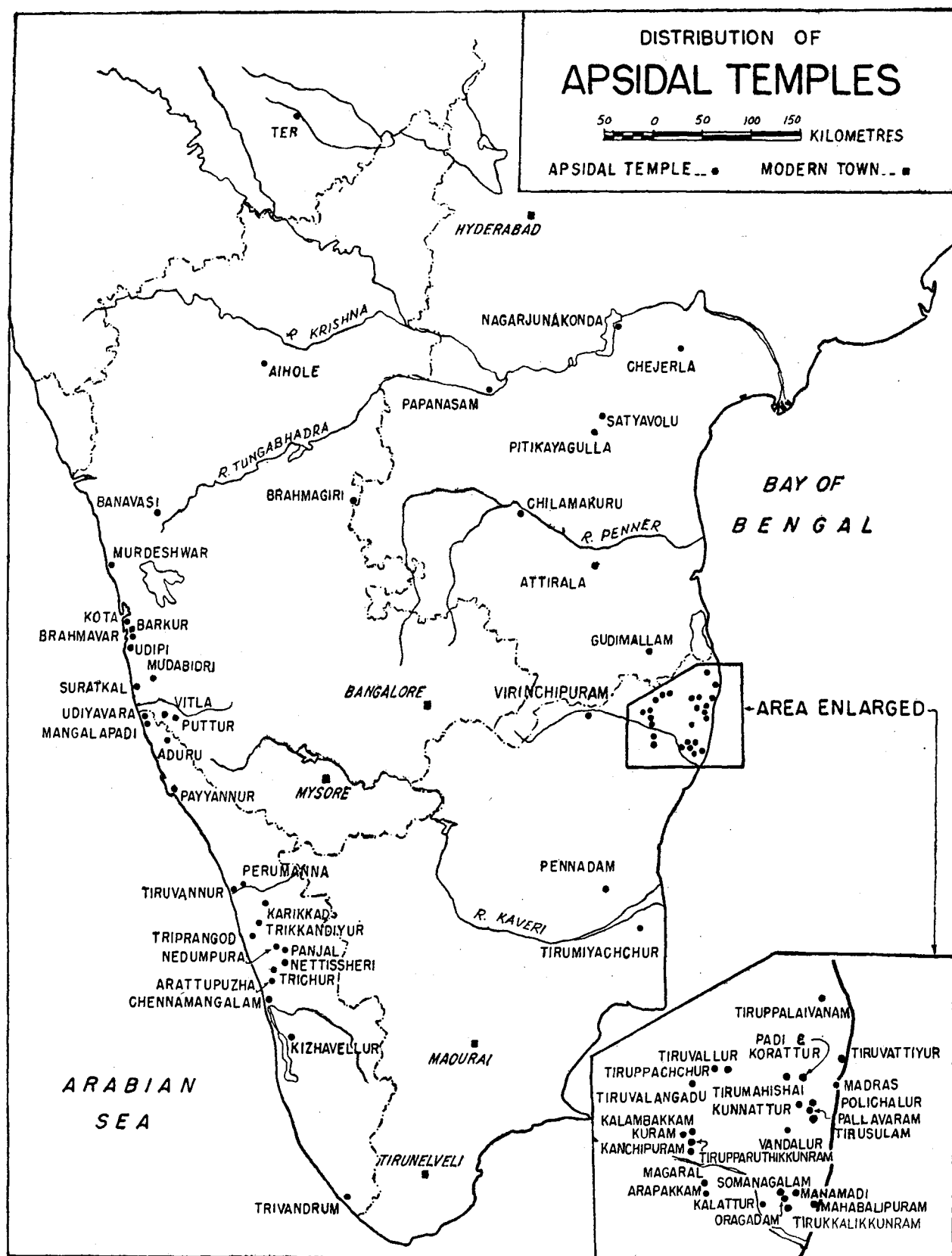


FIG. 6

temple at Trikkandiyur (fig. 33), all in District Malappuram, the Śiva temple at Tiruvannur (fig. 34), near Calicut, the Vāmana temple at Kizhavellur (fig. 51), District Kottayam, follow more or less the same ratio as the one noticed in Tuḷunāḍu. It may be mentioned here that the earliest remains of Brāhmaṇical apsidal temple coming from Nagarjunakonda have the width/length ratio ranging from 1:1.4 to 1:1.8. Perhaps the same east coast tradition slowly diffused to the west coast although the tendency towards the smaller ratio can be seen also in some later examples of the former region. For instance, the Piṭṭikēśvara temple at Pitikayagulla, the apsidal shrine in the Rāmaliṅgēśvara temple-complex at Satyavolu, both in District Kurnool, and the apsidal shrine at Papanasam, near Alampur, District Mahbubnagar, all in Andhra Pradesh, have the breadth/length ratio varying from 1:1.4 to 1:1.1. The apsidal temple of Papanasam may, practically speaking, be called semi-circular on plan. It seems quite likely that the semi-circular plan of Kerala was inspired largely by the same tradition, and is chronologically posterior to the other type in the west coast. The Durgā temple at Aihole shows the combination of the above-mentioned types because the *garbha-griha* is virtually semi-circular while the outer wall measures externally 47 ft 6 in x 25 ft (14.48 m x 7.62 m), thus giving a ratio of 1:1.9. The Sadāśiva temple at Mangalapadi (fig. 67), District Cannanore, bears close similarity with this type of ground-plan.

Now about the combination of the apsidal plan with the oblong one. The Ayyappaṇ (Śāstā) shrine in the Karikkad-kshetram at Manjeri, is apsidal externally, and oblong internally. It is divided internally into sanctum and a *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the former unit being of larger dimensions. A doorway, forming the constricted part of the plan, divides the sanctum from the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. All the apsidal shrines of the Early phase exhibit a clear division of the interior into sanctum and *mukha-maṇḍapa*; this division is, however, not seen on the exterior plan. Yet the Ayyappaṇ shrine of Manjeri, District Malappuram, is an unusual example having its lone counterpart in the Agastyēśvara temple at Chilamakuru, District Cuddapah, Andhra Pradesh; the latter has also a subsidiary Gaṇēśa shrine having an identical ground-plan. The temple-complex at Chilamakura seems to have been built by some Telugu-Chōḍa ruler of Rēnāṇḍu some time in the eighth century. It has been stated in a mutilated epigraph from the temple that some gift of land was effected in the reign of Vikramāditya Chōḷa-Mahārājuḷ (c. A.D. 700) when the queen Chōḷa-mahādēvuḷ, with Uttamāditya, perhaps their son, as *sāmanta*, was ruling at Chirumburu or Chilamakuru.¹ The apsidal temple at Manjeri appears to have been influenced by this architectural experiment in Rēnāṇḍu country. Allied to this type is the one with oblong exterior and apsidal interior, the like of which is absent in Kerala proper but available in Kanara country. The Prasanna-Sōmēśvara temple at Śambhukallu, Udiyavara, ascribable to the eighth century, consists of an apsidal temple enclosing a rectangular shrine, which is again apsidal internally. Its nearest parallel, if only the sanctum part is taken into account, comes from the late Buddhist phase of Amaravati, District Guntur, and the Paraśurāmēśvara temple at Attirala, District Cuddapah, Andhra

¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, XXVII (1948), pp. 220-51.

Pradesh. A temple with similar ground-plan is noticed at Murdeshwar, near Bhatkal, District North Kanara. In Buddhist architecture, it has a long history dating back to the first century B.C. because Cave 9 at Ajanta recalls a plan almost similar to it.

It is evident from the above that the apsidal plan of the temples in Kerala imbibed indirectly a number of forms and features from Āndhra and Kārṇāṭaka. These trends came to Kerala only through Tuḷunāḍu, which has the highest number of apsidal shrines on the west coast though not surpassing their incidence in Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam. Some of the apsidal shrines in Kerala have columns all along the circumambulatory passage, and the entire arrangement is reminiscent of the Buddhist architecture.

The circular shrine, in its most evolved stage, also adapted certain features common in the Buddhist architecture of India and Śrī-Laṅkā. It is absent in the civil and tribal house-types in Kerala, yet its popularity in the region is phenomenal. In the *Bṛihat-Saṁhitā*, of the early sixth century, circular temples constitute an important group, and the picture therein reflects undoubtedly the architectural development of that period. The *vṛisha*, *kalaśa* or *ghaṭa* and *vṛitta* are circular temples referred to in the *Bṛihat-Saṁhitā*;¹ even *samudga* or *samudra* of various texts that furnish the names of the twenty temples is circular on plan.² According to the *Bṛihat-Saṁhitā*, the *padma* should be in the shape of lotus (*padma padmākṛiti*). However, the lists of forty-five as well as sixty-four temples include it under *kailāsa* or circular group. Further, the *Śilparatna* of Śrī Kumāra mentions a type of circular temple (*vṛittākārāḥ surālayāḥ*) as the *padma-prāsāda*, and according to this text, there are fifteen such types.³ Admittedly, the tradition of constructing circular temples constituted an old tradition, perhaps with a far wider geographical distribution than what its present provenance shows. In the circumstances, its presence in the ninth or tenth century in Kerala may be considered a normal process of development, consequent on the diffusion of certain architectural trends. There is a strong tradition, as stated before (p. 3), in Kerala about the migration of the Nambūdiri Brāhmaṇas from the Gaṅgā valley and central India where a few circular temples like the ones at Tinduli,⁴ Parauli⁵ and Kurari⁶ are still extant. It is likely that this architectural conception disseminated to Kerala in the trail of some gradual movement of a people, if not a direct migration. Significantly, the temple at Tinduli is circular externally and square internally, while those at Parauli and Kurari are circular internally and sixteen-sided on the exterior. The former variety is present in Kerala but the latter type is still

¹ *Bṛihat-Saṁhitā*, Adh. LVI (*prāsāda-lakṣaṇādhyayaḥ*), st. 26. The passage runs as follows:

Vṛisha-eka-bhūmi-sṛiṅgo dvādaśahastaḥ samantato vṛittāḥ |

Haṁso haṁsaākāro ghaṭo-aṣṭahastaḥ kalasartapaḥ ||

² Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple* (Calcutta, 1946), I, p. 270 A. Also Torapada Bhattacharyya, *The Canons of Indian Art or a Study on Vāstuvidyā* (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 441-451.

³ *Śilparatna*, ed., by T. Ganapati Sastri, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, LXXV (Trivandrum, 1922), pp. 89-90, chapter XVI, 108-113.

⁴ *Annual Report of Archaeological Survey of India 1908-9* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

unknown in south India. Yet this alone hardly explains the popularity of circular shrines in Kerala. Moreover, the incorporation of a peripteral conception into circular temples is also unique, and evidently, the earlier strain from the Gaṅgā valley must have got mingled up with some other architectural development. Before we discuss this aspect it is necessary to give a brief outline of the shrine-interior of the Kerala style of temples in its most evolved phase.

As will be shown presently, Kerala temples, in the Middle phase, represented the amalgam of two styles, *Drāviḍa* and *Kēraḷa* or more precisely *Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa*. From outside, it is a Kerala temple concealing in its inner core a small *Drāviḍa-vimāna* having its own *grīvā* and *śikhara*. All round this miniature shrine, representing its *garbha-griha*, runs a row of columns; sometimes it is enclosed even by two rows. Such columns have been used only in the circular or the apsidal shrines and never in a square temple, where double circumambulatory, by providing an inner wall, is very common. Now, the circular temple with a miniature *Drāviḍa-vimāna* in the centre, the latter enclosed by one or two rows of columns, may be compared with the circular Buddhist temple of Śrī-Laṅkā known as *Vaṭa-dāge*. This very plan dates back to the early phase of Buddhist architecture in India, because the *stūpa* at Amaravati and the circular *chaitya-griha* at Junnar disclose identical layout. The only difference in the circular Kerala temples lies in the replacement of the *stūpa* by a square or circular *garbha-griha*. As already stated (p. 50), there exists a persistent tradition here about the migration of Iḷavas from Śrī-Laṅkā and it was this people who might have been responsible for popularizing this architectural form. It is this Ceylonese influence which may explain the concentration of circular shrines in south Kerala, the home of Buddhism on the west coast. And it is this type of circular temple which has possibly been described in the *Śilparatna* as the *padma-prāsāda* (above p. 70). The plan of some temples like the Parasurāmēśvara temple at Tiruvallam, near Trivandrum, conforms to the description of the *ghaṭa-prāsādas* of the *Śilpa*-texts,¹ as a narrow porch projects out of the main circular shrine giving an overall picture of a *ghaṭa* or pitcher. Though renovated in the Late phase (below, p. 253) it was built in the middle of the twelfth century.

Now to the elliptical shrines of Kerala. Let it be admitted that these are rather rare but by no means absent. As a matter of fact, the type is rare in the whole of India though some of the earliest temples, like the one at Vidhisa (Madhya Pradesh) and Nagari (Rajasthan), were built on elliptical plan;² the occurrence of such ground plan in the Buddhist and the Ājīvika traditions need not, however, detain us here. There are a few elliptical shrines in south India like the Jvarāharēśvara temple at Kanchipuram, Śrī Raṅganāthasvāmī temple at Srirangam and the Kaḷḷaḷagar temple at Alagarkovil, all being located in Tamil Nadu. In Kerala, the Śiva temple at Vaikam (fig. 69), District Kottayam, (below, p. 269) is more elliptical than circular as it measures 57 ft × 50 ft (17.37 m × 15.24 m) in the longer and the shorter axes. It should not be taken as an imperfect circle, specially because the architects of Kerala were masters in the construction of circular temples. Furthermore,

¹ H. Sarkar (1972), *op. cit.*, pp. 270-79.

² H. Sarkar, *Studies in Early Buddhist Architecture of India* (Delhi, 1966), pp. 15-24.

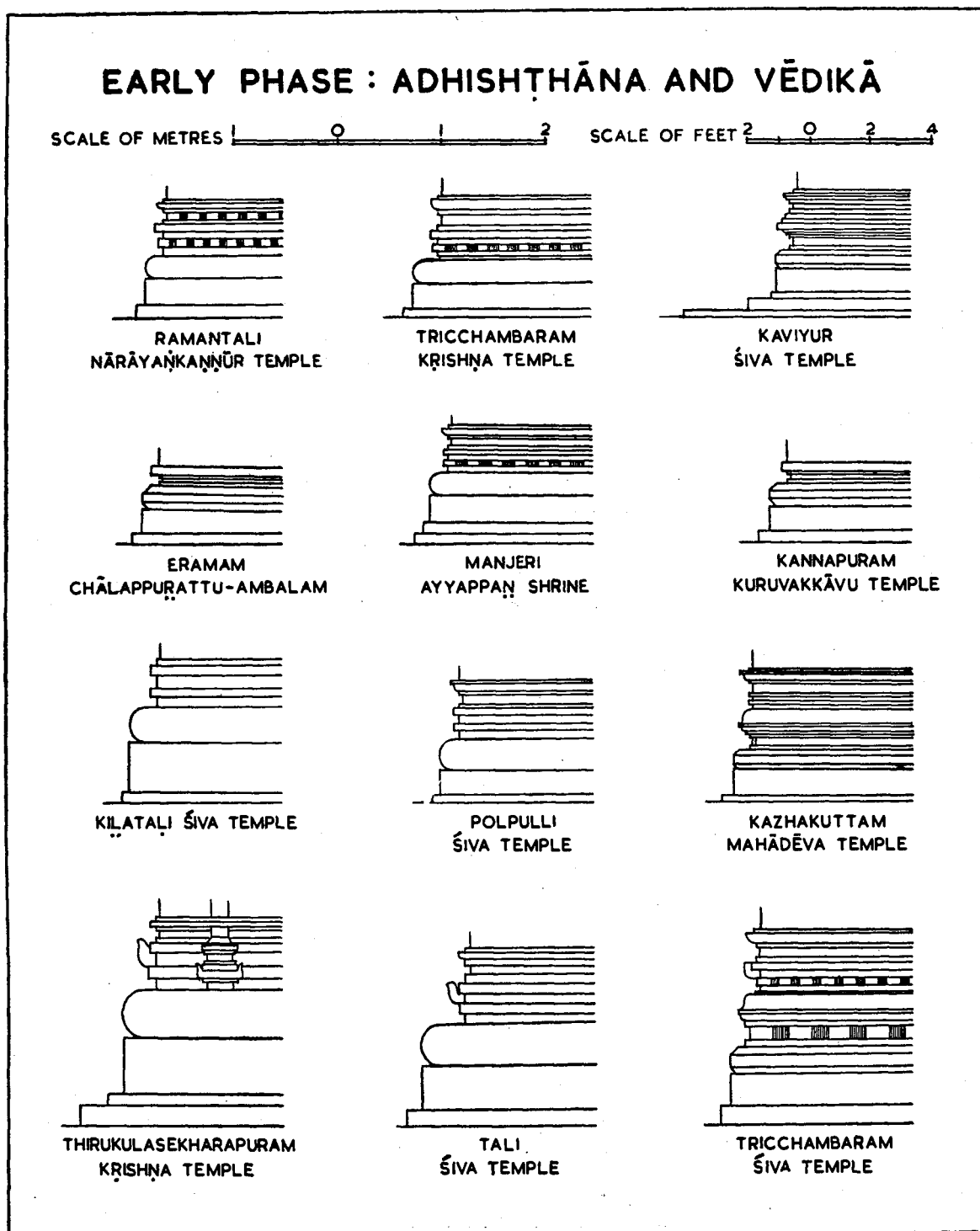


FIG. 7

there is a definite tradition of building *vr̥ittāyata* temple in the *Śilpa* texts including the *Tantrasamuchchaya*.¹ Perhaps the elliptical plan made its debut in the Middle phase because the *adhishṭhāna* of a deserted temple, now used as *kūttambalam*, in front of the Mahādēva temple at Chengannur, District Alleppey, is clearly of the same outline.

5. DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF ELEVATION

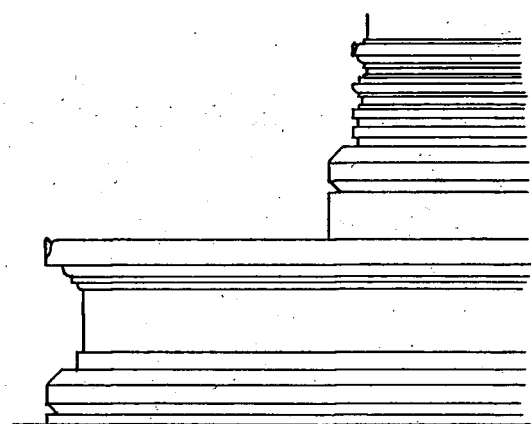
A. GENERAL

Most of the temples in Kerala style are *ekabhūmi-vimānas* wherein it is difficult to differentiate the usual six *aṅgas* of the temple. Alternatively, such temples may be conceived as belonging to the *chaturaṅga-vimāna* in which *prastara* forms part of the wall itself. In all cases, *adhishṭhāna* and *bhitti* are clearly distinguishable, while *prastara* is generally represented by *uttara*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*; *ālīṅga* and *antari*, if present, are in the form of blocking courses. But the real difficulty comes in regard to the identification of *grīvā*, which may be the little upward rise of the plain wall above the *prastara*. It is followed by a sloping roof or *śikhara*, pinnacled by metal *stūpī*. There are a number of *dvitala-vimānas* where there is a clear-cut *prastara* and even the *hāra* overtopping it. A sloping roof comes above the *hāra*, and marks the end of the *āditala*; *grīvā*, carved with *hāra* motifs, apart from *grīvā-kōshṭhas*, rises above it. In the architectural usage of Kerala, *grīvā* and the upper storey are conterminous; it is perhaps a case of integration of the two ideas into one architectural member. This very idea of condensation may have been followed in combining *grīvā* with *prastara* of an *ekabhūmi*-temple, the latter having a small parapet invariably without any *hāra*. In any case *grīvā* of a square *vimāna* is surmounted by a square *śikhara* in the form of a pyramidal roof, each side with a *nāsikā* or *kiḷi-vāsal*. Likewise, for circular or apsidal temple, *grīvā* takes an identical shape but the notable exception to this rule is the Māḍattilappaṇ shrine, ascribable to the Middle phase, in the Peruvanam temple-complex (pl. XXVII). Though built on a square plan, it has an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara* similar to the miniature *Drāviḍa-vimāna* inside a temple of the Middle phase. Some circular shrines like the Brahmā temple at Tirunavaya, District Malappuram, for example, have at present octagonal roof but whether it is an old feature or not is difficult to say because of the presence of modern tiled roof.

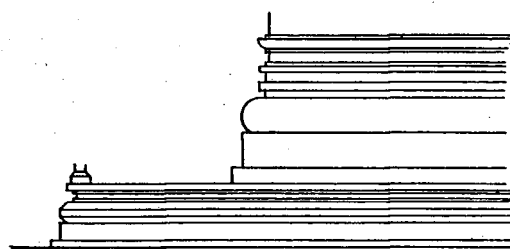
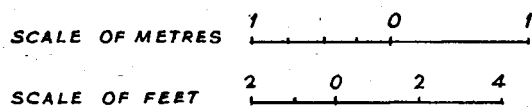
In the Middle phase, some *tritāla*-temples might have been built in the Chēra country, the most important example being the Māḍattilappaṇ temple, mentioned above. Similarly, the Late phase also witnessed the rise of *tritāla*-temples. For instance, the Mahāliṅgēśvara temple at Aduru, District Cannanore, apsidal on plan, from *adhishṭhāna* to *śikhara* is a *tritāla-vimāna* having a very imposing look (pl. LXIII C). Leaving aside generalities, we may now discuss the development of the individual *aṅgas*, of which the *adhishṭhāna* is the most important so far as the temples in Kerala are concerned.

¹ *Tantrasamuchchaya*, paṭala II, 68 (*vr̥ittāyata prāsāda*).

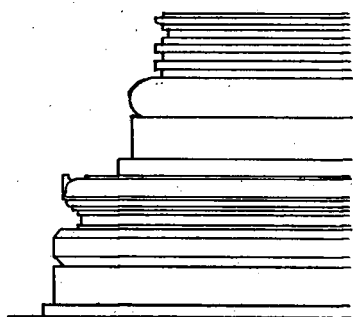
EARLY AND MIDDLE PHASES: ADHISHṬHĀNA AND VĒDIKĀ



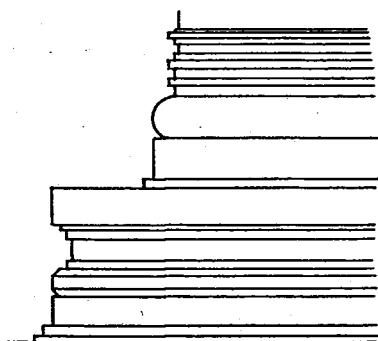
KANDIYUR: ŚIVA TEMPLE



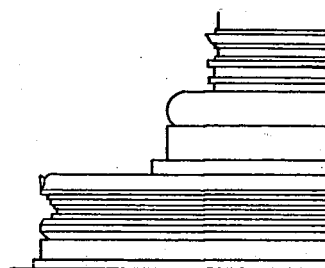
TRIPRANGOD: KĀLASAMHĀRAMŪRTI TEMPLE



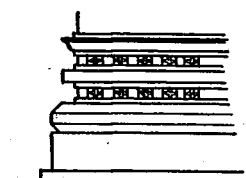
TIRUVANNUR: ŚIVA TEMPLE



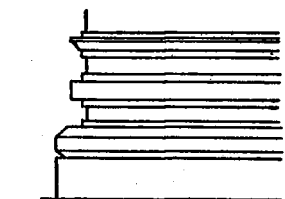
NETIRIMANGALAM: ŚIVA TEMPLE



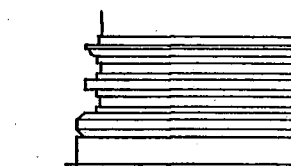
TRIKKANDIYUR: ŚIVA TEMPLE



PERUMPALADUR:
NĀRANATTUKKĀVU



PARTHIVASEKHARAPURAM:
PĀRTHASĀRATHI TEMPLE



MUNJIRA:
ŚIVA TEMPLE, TIRUMALAI

FIG. 8

B. THE ADHISHṬHĀNA

(Figs. 7-11)

As stated before, the *adhishṭhānas* of Kerala temples (figs. 7-11) were subjected to less frequent alterations. Generally speaking, they share the same features and mouldings as those of the usual Drāviḍa tradition. Unfortunately, the *adhishṭhāna* in Kerala style shows little evolution in their mouldings and ornamentations, thereby rendering it difficult to distinguish earlier types from the later ones. Both *prati-bandha* and *pāda-bandha* types of *adhishṭhāna* were in vogue in Kerala, though the latter type appears to have been dominant. According to the *Kāśyapaśilpa*,¹ the *adhishṭhāna* of the *prati-bandha* class has the *kumuda* of the *vr̥tta* variety, while octagonal-*kumuda*,² commonly described as *tripaṭṭa-kumuda*, is associated with the *pāda-bandha* class. Applying this criterion we find that the *pāda-bandha* class of *adhishṭhānas* had its popularity in southern Kerala, and *prati-bandha*³ class in northern part and more especially in central Kerala.

Irrespective of their *śāstric* nomenclature, the *adhishṭhānas* of Kerala may broadly be divided into two groups: those with a highly recessed moulding above the *kumuda*, and those generally crowned by *kapōta* or *paṭṭikā*, the recessing in the latter being only in the middle part. In numerous instances, the projection of the mouldings above the *kumuda* is practically in alignment with the vertical rise of the wall. Sometimes, *tōraṇas*, *ghana-dvāras*, and *kuḍya-stambhas* start from above the *kumuda*. Their individual mouldings comprise *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vr̥tta*-or octagonal-*kumuda*, highly recessed *kaṇṭha*, *kampa*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*—the projection of the *kampa* being almost the same as that of the *paṭṭikā*. In all likelihood, this is the type described without any name in the *Tantrasamuchchaya*, a Keralite work of A.D. 1426.⁴ The type has been noticed in the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram, the ruined Śiva temple at Polpulli, District Palghat, the Śiva temple at Tali, District Trichur, and so on. They occur commonly in central Kerala, the main centre of activities of the Chēras, and less commonly in the southern part.

A variant of this type is the one wherein the *kaṇṭha* is divided into two halves by a dentil course. It is, however, difficult to work out any evolutionary process between the two, for the variant type occurs at several early sites like, for example the Nārāyaṇkaṇṇūr temple at Ramantali, District Cannanore. Moreover, the idea of introducing dentils may have been inspired by some northern trend. Nevertheless, this type of *adhishṭhāna* may be taken as characteristic of Kerala temples although the Jalanādēśvara temple at Takkolam, District North Arcot, built during the time of Aparājita-varmaṇ Pallava, some time in the first half of the ninth century, has its mouldings above the *kumuda* considerably recessed. Yet, the nearest parallel comes from the Sundarēśvara temple at Sendalai, the

¹ *Kāśyapaśilpa*, VI, 25-26. Also, N. V. Mallayya (1942), *op. cit.*, p. 185.

² In recent times all *kumudas* exhibiting three facets are being termed as *tripaṭṭa-kumuda*. But the texts differentiate *tripaṭṭa* from the octagonal type. In these pages the term octagonal *kumuda* has mostly been used.

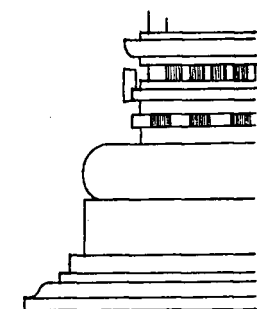
³ Normally speaking, *pāda-bandha* means the class of *adhishṭhāna* which has *pādas* either in the *gala* or in the *vēdikā*, while *prati-bandha* is overtopped by a *prati*.

⁴ *Tantrasamuchchaya*, *pañjala* II, 13-14.

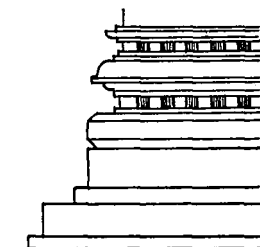
MIDDLE PHASE : ADHISHṬHĀNA AND VĒDIKĀ

SCALE OF METRES 1 0 1 2

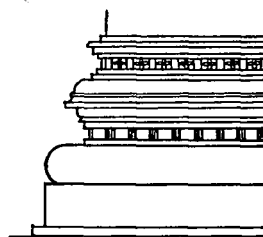
SCALE OF FEET 2 0 2 4 6 8



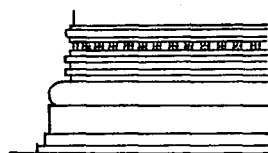
EDAPPAL
DAKSHINĀMŪRTI TEMPLE



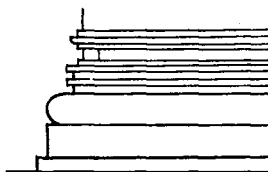
PULPATTA
ŚIVA TEMPLE



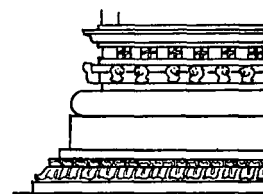
UDAYAMPERUR
PERUNTIRUKKŌYIL TEMPLE



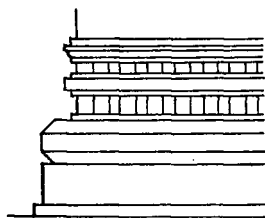
TIRUNILLAI
ŚIVA TEMPLE



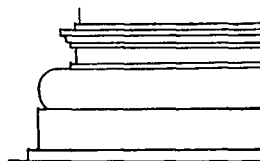
PANJAL
AYYAPPAṅKĀVU TEMPLE



PUNALUR
TRIKŌṬĒŚVARA TEMPLE



NEMAM
NĪRAMANKARA TEMPLE



ANANTAPURAM
ANANTAPADMANĀBHASVĀMĪ
TEMPLE

FIG. 9

capital of the Muttaraiyar chiefs, in District Thanjavur. Some of the *adhishthānas* may have a *padma-pādukā* below as an optional member.

The *adhishthāna* terminating in *kapōta*, sometimes even followed by a *prati*, is more or less contemporaneous with the other type described above, even though there are vague indications of their having an earlier beginning. In the apsidal temples at Triprangod, Trikkandiyur, in District Malappuram, and Tiruvannur, District Kozhikode, the earlier *adhishthānas* seem to have been used as their *upapīṭhas* while the recessed type described earlier constitutes their existing *adhishthānas*. The mouldings of the present *upapīṭha* consist of *upanā*, *jagatī*, octagonal-kumuda, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas*, *uttara*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*. It conforms to one of the *śrī-bandha* types described in the *Śilparatna* of Śrīkumāra.

The Śiva temple at Kandiur, District Alleppey, and the all-stone granite temple at Netirimangalam, District Palghat, both square on plan, also stand on an *upapīṭha*, having a very tall *kaṇṭha* with prominent *gala-pādas*. Such high *kaṇṭha* can be seen in the cave-temple at Kaviyur. Furthermore, the *kaṇṭha* of the *adhishthāna* of the Mahādēva temple at Kazhakuttam, District Trivandrum, and the Rājarājēśvara temple at Tricchambaram, District Cannanore, is also fairly high, and there are *gala-pādas* in both the cases. By and large, Kerala temples, specially of the Early and Middle phases, have no high *upapīṭha*, but are frequently provided with the *padma-pādukā* from very early times. Again, a careful scrutiny may reveal that the present *upapīṭhas* of the temples mentioned above, are virtually out of tune with the entire architectural composition. Considering these facts, it seems likely that the present *upapīṭhas* of the Kandiur and Netirimangalam temples are indeed the earlier form of *adhishthānas*, crowned as they are by a *kapōta* moulding. Occasionally, builders of the Pallava temples had, no doubt, introduced *kapōta* moulding in the *adhishthāna*, yet it is essentially an early Chālukyan feature, which might have gone to Kerala quite early in the history of its temple-architecture. The Pallavas and their contemporaries, and even their successors in the Tamiḷ country, showed a predilection for the *adhishthāna* terminating in thick and extended *paṭṭikā*, sometimes followed by *prati*.

The *upapīṭhas* mentioned in the foregoing instances are not followed by *vēdikā*. On the other hand, the *vēdikā* above the *adhishthāna* is a common feature of the Kerala style. The conception came to stay possibly in the eighth century when a few Pallava temples adapted it, and Kerala might have got it from the Tamiḷ country in the early part of the ninth century. From then onwards, it continued as an inseparable element of the Kerala style of temple-architecture.

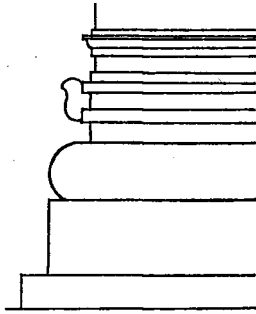
In the Middle phase also, the *kapōta-bandha* type of *adhishthāna*, to use a term of wider connotation, continued to enjoy popularity alongside the type with highly-recessed mouldings above the *kumuda*. Many of these *adhishthānas* show *prati* above the *kapōta*. Significantly, the absence of *prati* in the old Janārdana temple at Varkkalla, District Trivandrum, having an inscription of the middle of the thirteenth century (above, p. 58)

¹ *Śilparatna*, *purvabhāga*, XXI, 88.

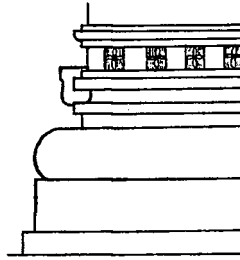
MIDDLE PHASE : ADHISHṬHĀNA AND VĒDIKĀ

SCALE OF METRES 1 0 1 2

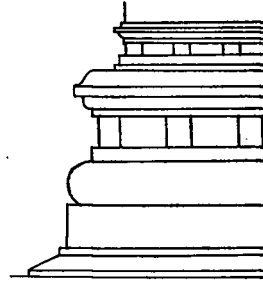
SCALE OF FEET 2 0 2 4 6 8



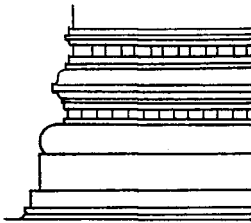
PERUVANAM
MĀḌATTILAPPAṆ TEMPLE



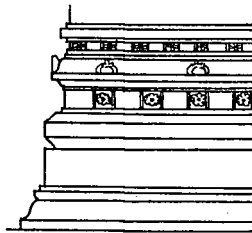
NEDUMPURA
ŚIVA TEMPLE



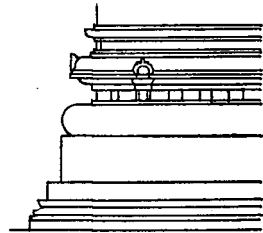
KIZHAVELLUR
VĀMANA TEMPLE



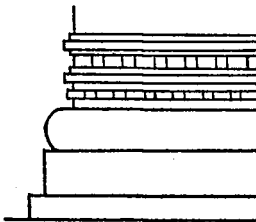
TRICHUR
VADĀKKUNNĀTHA TEMPLE



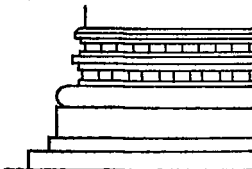
TRIPAYAR
RĀMA TEMPLE



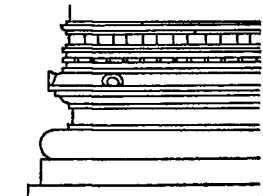
PERUVANAM
IRATṬAIYAPPAṆ TEMPLE



MANIYUR
SUBRAHMANYA TEMPLE



CHALAPURAM
KAṬṬILMĀDAM TEMPLE



MANJERI
SUBRAHMANYA TEMPLE

FIG. 10

may suggest the disappearance of this moulding some time in the thirteenth century. Moreover, the earlier variety like the ones at Pulpatta and Manjeri is taller in height (average 3 ft 5 in or 1.04 m) than the later series (average height 2 ft 11 in or 0.89 m). Apart from the disappearance of *prati* as the topmost moulding in some of the *adhishṭhānas* of this type, one notices, at the same time, the appearance of a new decorative element in the form of floral design alternating with *gala-pādas*, both in the *kaṇṭha* as well as in the *vēdikās*. Though it cannot be proved with certainty, there are good indications of its coming into vogue some time in the eleventh century, because the *adhishṭhāna* of this class comes from the Rāma temple at Triprayar and the Vaḍakkunnātha shrine at Trichur, both of them bearing inscription of the eleventh century. The very practice of engraving inscription on the *adhishṭhāna* seems to have assumed wide currency in this period itself.

The *kapōta-bandha adhishṭhāna* is associated either with octagonal or circular *kumuda* but invariably the *praṇāla* comes out from the upper part occupied by mouldings like *kapōta*, *valabhī* and *kaṇṭha*. In the case of other *adhishṭhāna*-types, the *praṇāla* comes out mainly from the *kaṇṭha*. Another new decoration in the *kaṇṭha* is the appearance of *śimha* or *vyāla-mālā*, perhaps replacing the simple dentil course. Such *śimha-mālā* has been noticed in the Gōvardhana shrine of the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram, District Trichur, and the Trikōtēśvara temple at Punalur, District Quilon. In the latter example, one can see the use of *padmas* too, which attained wide popularity in the Tamil country under the Chōḷas.

Some of the temples in District Trivandrum, like the Nīramaṅkara temple at Nemam, the Paraśurāmēśvara temple-complex at Tiruvallam, the Mahādēva temple at Valiasalai have the *adhishṭhāna* typical of the Tamil country. *Adhishṭhānas* of this type consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* and *paṭṭikā*, the last member having the same degree of projection as the *kumuda* or *jagatī*.


Thus most of the changes that one comes across in the temples of Middle phase are by way of external decorations. The Late phase, however, produced a few highly elaborate *adhishṭhānas* as in the Rāmēśvara temple at Kollam or Quilon. Here the ornamental *adhishṭhāna* stands on an equally ornate *upapīṭha*; its *hasti-hasta* banisters are also in tune with the basement and the *nāla*. Similarly, the Gaṇapati temple at Quilon has also a very elaborate *upapīṭha* and *adhishṭhāna*. Both the temples were built in Drāviḍa style. It need not in any way be lost sight of that the majority of the temples of this phase were associated with plain and simple *adhishṭhāna*. There are *adhishṭhānas* also of the *mañcha* variety as noticed in the Kalpathi temple at Palghat. But according to the prescription of the *Vāstu-śāstra*, the *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna* is the characteristic of residential buildings and should not be employed for the abode of gods.

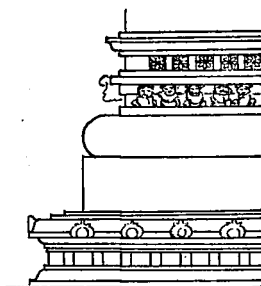
In south Kerala, *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna* has often been used in the construction of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, generally built of granite; otherwise, the general practice is to provide an *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal-*kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*.

Before we close our discussion on *adhishṭhāna*, it is proposed to have a few words about the proportion of the various mouldings. In the *Vāstu-śāstras*, each *adhishṭhāna* type

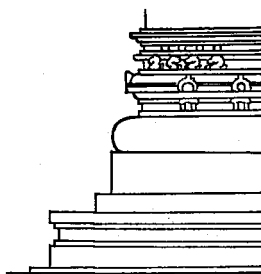
LATE PHASE : ADHISHṬHĀNA AND VĒDIKĀ

SCALE OF METRES 

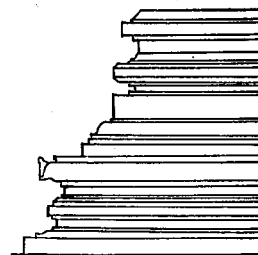
SCALE OF FEET 



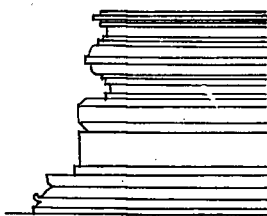
UDAYANAPURAM
SUBRAHMANYA TEMPLE



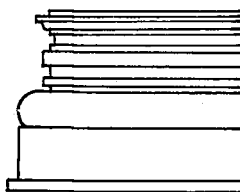
TIRUVALATTUR
BHAGAVATĪ TEMPLE



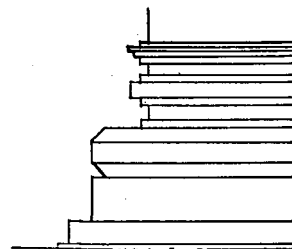
QUILON
RĀMĒŚVARA TEMPLE



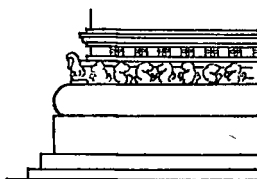
ETTUMANUR
ŚIVA TEMPLE



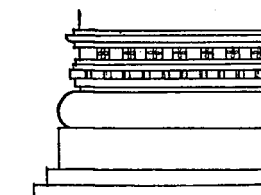
MANGALAPADI
SADĀŚIVA TEMPLE



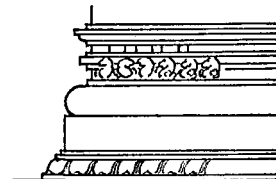
NAVAIKULAM
ŚĀṆKARANĀRĀYAṆA TEMPLE



PODIYAL
KRISHNA TEMPLE



KOZHICODE
TALI TEMPLE



CHENGANNUR
NARASIMHA TEMPLE

FIG. 11

is conceived of as belonging to some fixed height; and the height is made up of various parts. For example, the unnamed *adhishṭhāna* of twenty-four parts, mentioned in the *Tantra-samuchchaya* (II, 13-14) consists of the following parts: *upāna* 3; *jagatī* 8; *kumuda* 7; *kaṇṭha* 1-4/5; *kamṭa* 1-1/5; *kaṇṭha* 1-4/5; and *paṭṭikā* 1-1/5. Our attempt to discern these proportions by obtaining detailed measurements did not yield any result. Yet it is possible to make some generalizations on the basis of the data collected so far. But no definite conclusion can be drawn in the absence of any comparative figures from other regions.

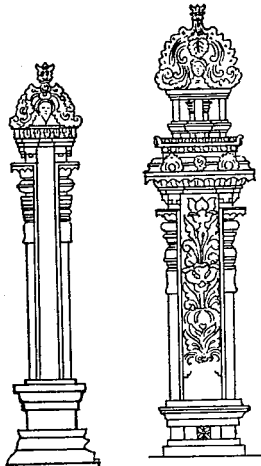
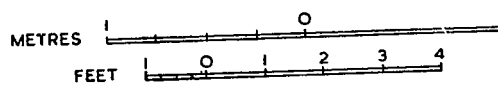
The normal height of the *adhishṭhāna* of the temples of Kerala varies from 1 ft 8 in (0.51 m) to 5 ft 5 in (1.65 m). But the maximum concentration (70%) is in the group ranging from 2½ ft (0.76 m) to 3½ ft (1.07 m). Not more than a dozen temples may fall in the group of over 4 ft (1.22 m). Of the *adhishṭhāna* mouldings, the lowest member, barring the *upapīṭha* or *padma-pādukā*, is the *upāna* or *pādukā* which has a height varying from less than 2 inches (0.05 m) to 9 in (0.23 m). There is a definite preference for the height of about 41 inches (1.04 m) constituting more than 40% of the total; only three examples fall in the group of less than 2 in (0.05 m), while there are only 7 instances having a height of more than 6 in (0.15 m). The *jagatī* is a tall moulding, and in Kerala its height ranges from 4½ in (0.11 m) to 1 ft 10 in (0.56 m) despite the fact that the major concentration (80%) is in the group varying from 8 in (0.20 m) to 1 ft 1 in (0.33 m). Less than 10% may fall in the group of above 1 ft 1 in (0.33 m). Generally *kumuda* is shorter than *jagatī* but occasionally it may be equal or even taller, specially when it relates to octagonal *kumuda*. So far as the height of the *kumuda* is concerned it varies from 6 in (0.15 m) to 1 ft 7 in (0.48 m), with a concentration in the 9 in (0.23 m) group, the latter accounting for 35% of the total. Practically 90% of the examples fall in the groups varying between 7 in (0.18 m) to 1 ft (0.30 m). The *vēdikā* above the *adhishṭhāna* has a height ranging between 4 in (0.10 m) to 1 ft 5 in (0.43 m). More than 70% of the total, however, shows a preference in the group of 7 in (0.18 m) to 10 in (0.25 m).

C. THE BHITTI AND PRASTARA

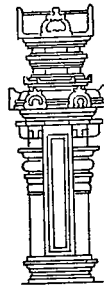
Above the *adhishṭhāna* and *vēdikā* rises the wall or the *bhitti* decorated with various motifs like *kuḍya-stambhas*, *tōraṇa*-arches, *ghana-dvāras*, all carved out of laterite blocks. Various motifs that have been executed on laterite walls are fairly preserved, and what makes them look new is the plastering, without which the ornamentation would have remained drab and unimpressive. These wall-ornamentations may be divided into various categories: door and *ghana-dvāras*, return and projections of wall, *dēva-kōshṭhas* and sham niches (fig. 12), pilasters or *kuḍya-stambhas*, *tōraṇas*, *pañjaras*, *jālakas*, *nāsikās* and so on.

One thing is certain that many early temples had four functional doors, thereby conforming to the *sarvatōbhadrā* type of the texts. Evidently, the idea of external light entering the interior of the sanctum was as much in vogue as the building of totally dark temples. Side by side, there were temples with one functional door and three false [doors or *ghana-dvāras*, a conception which never gained popularity in other architectural traditions. Theoretically speaking, the *ghana-dvāras* may be taken as a stylized form of the

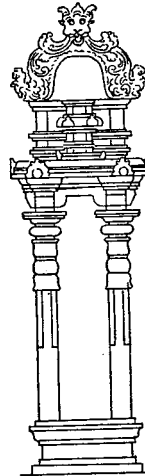
TYPES OF NICHES : KERALA



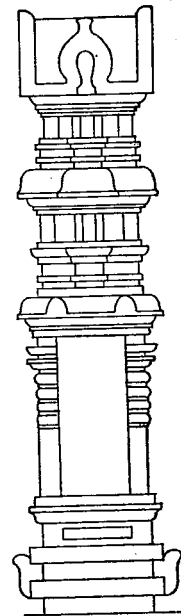
UDAYANAPURAM
SUBRAHMANYA TEMPLE



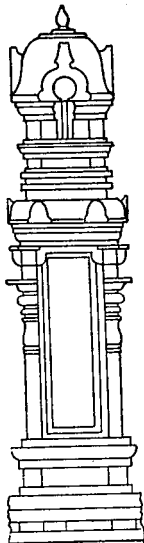
PODIYAL
KRISHNA TEMPLE



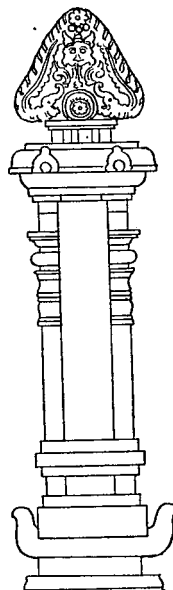
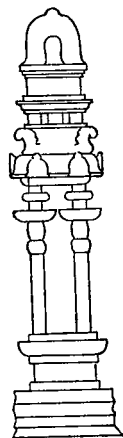
THIRUVANCHIKULAM
SIVA TEMPLE



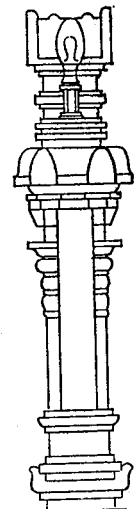
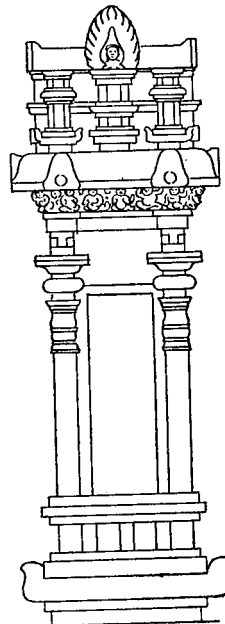
PERUVANAM
MADATTILAPPAN



MANIYUR
SUBRAHMANYA TEMPLE



TIRUKKULASEKHARAPURAM
KRISHNA TEMPLE



TALI
SIVA TEMPLE

FIG. 12

real door, thus indicating a later development. But such hypothesis has hardly any relevance in the actual evolution of the Kerala style of temples, where both the types coexisted even in the Early phase. At the same time, three and two functional doors appear to have come into existence only in the Middle phase.

It has already been stated that the temples of Kerala never followed a plan similar to *ratha* or *bhadra* projections so common in temple-plans of various regional styles of India. Yet many temples, specially those built on square plan, have alternate projections and recesses which may even be carried downwards through the *adhishṭhāna*. Relieving of the walls with projections and returns gives rise to the division of the wall into five bays, associated variously with decorative devices like *kuḍya-stambhas* or pilaster-motifs, *tōraṇas* with *makara*-arches or *śālā-śikharas*, *kapōta-pañjaras* and so on. These motifs were executed possibly after fixing the slabs into walls, a technique followed widely in the Pallava tradition. But we do not know of the existence of any unfinished laterite temple which may support the above contention, though the granite temple at Netirimangalam, near Pattambi, District Palghat, follows undoubtedly the same method of construction: here all the parts, including the *adhishṭhāna*, remain incomplete with rough surfaces and chisel marks galore over various decorative components.

Such recesses and projections have been provided also in circular and apsidal temples. But a vast number of temples, obviously of later date or renovated in comparatively recent times, does not show projections and returns. Instead, the walls are simply relieved by pilasters, niches and *ghana-dvāras*. That does not mean that in the Late phase the walls have not been relieved with recesses and projections in the form of *bhadra* in the centre and *karṇas* at the corners, besides *hārāntaras*. In fact, these decorative elements continued throughout the history of Kerala's temple-architecture. *Karṇas* exhibit sham niches except in the case of the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram where occurs the fluted *vṛitta-sphuṭita*, crowned by a *nāsika* (pl. XIII); it is without the *kumbha*-member at the bottom. In point of fact, this feature in the Kṛishṇa temple stands as an isolated example, and is also not noticed in the early temples of Tamiḷnāḍu. In the *bhadra* part is placed either the niched functional opening or the *ghana-dvāras*. Very often *śālā-pañjaras* occur in the *hārāntaras*. These aspects will be dealt with while describing the select examples of temples. Suffice it here to say that it is at present difficult to work out any chronological sequence on the basis of variations in the decorative elements of the wall. But mode of execution of various motifs and their ornamentations may, however, give some clue about their chronological position if one cares to study them in greater detail.

The Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram has yet another unique feature in that its *hārāntaras* between the *bhadra* and the *karṇa* has *kapōta-pañjaras* used as the *dēva-kōshṭhas* (pls. XII A and B). And these *dēva-kōshṭhas* enshrine standing images, a feature not seen anywhere in Kerala. As a matter of fact, even in the Pāṇḍya country and, also to some extent, in the early Gaṅga tradition in Karnataka¹ *dēva-kōshṭhas*, which are extremely

¹ Similar type is at least present in the Pañchakūṭa Basti at Kambadahalli, Nagamangala Taluk of District Mysore, Karnataka State.

shallow, do not contain any image. In Kerala temples, decorated *jālas*, either of wood or stone, have often been used for embellishing the wall.

Above the *bhitti* comes the *prastara* or entablature, with only two prominent mouldings, *kapōta* with *nāsikās* or *kuḍus* and *valabhī*, the latter generally with *bhūta-mālā*. It is noteworthy that in Tuḷunāḍu, the most popular decorative element of *valabhī* is *haṁsa-mālā* which might have been derived from the early Gaṅga tradition. In many examples, either early or late, the *prastara* is followed by *hāra* showing *kūṭas*, *śālās* and *pañjaras* shown in high relief. A distinguishing feature of later developments is the accompaniment of various animals, in stucco, arranged systematically in different parts of the *hāra*. But *hāra* has been employed only in the *dvitala*-or *tritatala-vimāna* and naturally not in any *ekabhūmi*-shrine.

6. THE SHRINE-INTERIOR

The interior of the sanctum of the Kerala temples is generally inaccessible to all except the concerned priest. On the other hand, several interesting architectural features remain hidden inside it, and these are some of the architectural elements which impart a distinctive character to this style.¹ Evident as it is, the temples of Kerala conform to both *nirandhāra* (without ambulatory) and *sāndhāra* (with ambulatory) types, but it appears, although we cannot support it by any statistical data, that the latter outnumbers the former. And it is the *sāndhāra* group which presents several notable variations. Of the *nirandhāra* temples, mention may be made of the ruined Śiva temple, circular on plan, at Polpulli (fig. 29), associated with an inscription of the ninth century.

Broadly speaking, the examples of *sāndhāra* temples may be divided into two groups, viz., shrines with the walls of the *garbha-griha* rising to the same height as those of the outer walls or *bāhya-bhittis* (pl. LXXIII and fig. 39) while in the other type, the *garbha-griha* forms an independent entity with a domical roof surmounting the sanctum (figs. 42 and 47), which, more often than not, has its own flight of steps. The former type is confined generally to the Early phase and its examples include the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram, Śiva temple at Tali, near Trichur, Nārayaṅkaṇṇūr temple at Ramantali and so on.

Admittedly, this early group is represented by only a few examples in spite of its widespread distribution not only in south India but also in the temple-architecture of the north. In such temples no columns have been provided, and only one *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* runs around the sanctum. The Kīlataḷi Śiva temple (pl. XVI A) at Cranganur and the Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa shrine (pl. XVII C) in the Varāhamūrti temple at Panniyur, District Palghat, offer clear view of the interior, for their outer walls have collapsed completely. These are temples built on square plan but exactly the same arrangement can be noticed in the circular temple of Nārayaṅkaṇṇūr, having four openings (pl. XXII A and fig. 39). Here the circular inner wall rises up to the height of the ceiling, yet the *garbha-griha* is square

¹ H. Sarkar, 'Shrine-interiors of Kerala style of temples', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, I (Trivandrum, 1973), pp. 1-8.

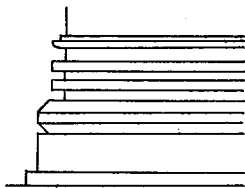
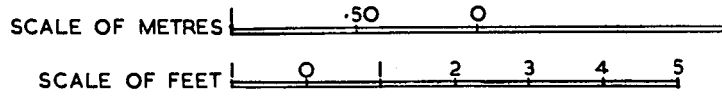
internally. No apsidal shrine with traditional *sāndhāra* circuit is known to the author; the Ayyappaṇ shrine at Manjeri, which is apsidal externally and oblong internally, is an example of *niradhāra* temple.

The other group of *sāndhāra* temples possibly emerged in the Middle phase and forms a definite contribution of Kerala to the temple-architecture of India. Its frequency far outnumbers the other variety; it is, for that matter, still in vogue throughout Kerala. For obtaining a clearer idea of this architectural innovation, it is proposed to give a detailed description of the Śiva temple at Tirunillai (fig. 47) near Palghat (below, p.209). As its circular outer wall has fallen down, it offers a clear view of the circular *garbha-griha*, which has been transformed into square internally. The *garbha-griha* is made of bricks though stone has been used in the ceiling and the dome. At present, the outer wall is represented by granite *adhishṭhāna*, and the circumambulatory path between the *bāhya-bhitti* and the *garbha-griha* wall is paved with stone slabs. It seems that no row of columns was provided here in the ambulatory. The circular brick-wall of the *garbha-griha* is relieved by twelve thin pilasters which stand on an incipient *adhishṭhāna* indicated by projections at the bottom-most courses. It, too, has *ghana-dvāras*, apart from *valabhī* and *kapōta*, pertaining to the *prastara*. The stone-ceiling inside rises in tiers; evidently, the domical top has been achieved by providing horizontal arch based on corbelling. From outside, the *śikhara*, without having a well-defined *grīvā* below, looks like a compressed domical formation, with eight facets. Thus the *gārbha-grihas* of this type have their own respective *adhishṭhānas* (fig. 13) and *stūpīs*.

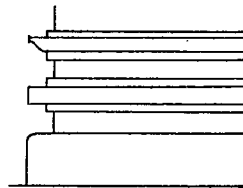
Let us now take an example of the developed form of *garbha-griha* in the shape of a miniature Drāviḍa-*vimāna*. The main shrine of the Eraṇḍumūrti Amman temple-complex at Tiruvalattur (fig. 65), near Palghat, is a circular temple rebuilt some time in the sixteenth century (below, p. 261). It encloses a square *garbha-griha*, made of granite, with a separate *adhishṭhāna*, the mouldings of which consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *paṭṭikā* and *prati*. The walls of the *garbha-griha* are plain, but the curved cornice or *kapōta* on all the four sides is adorned with *nāsikās*, two on each side. Above the short octagonal *grīvā* rises an octagonal *śikhara*, very short in height; thus it can easily be compared with the temples of the Tamiḷ country. According to the widely-accepted classification of the *Vāstu-śāstra*, temples with octagonal *śikhara* are called Drāviḍa-*vimāna*, as the square and circular ones are termed Nāgara and Vēsara respectively. Despite the fact that the octagonal *śikhara* has been employed in the Pallava architecture, its incidence is relatively higher in the Pāṇḍya country. But in Kerala it constitutes an overwhelming majority. It is noteworthy that with the pure Drāviḍa form has been blended in such temples of the Middle phase the indigenous architecture of Kerala having the sloping roof. So far as the constructional feature is concerned such roof is made on the principle of trabeation in which space has been spanned by employing stones of square and triangular shapes arranged in different tiers.

In some cases, the spire above the miniature shrine is quite tall, as it has been noticed in the Bhagavatī temple at Kumaranallur, District Kottayam. Similar *śikhara*-construction, has been followed in the Mahādēva shrine of the Paraśurāma temple-complex at Tiruvallam near Trivandrum. Undoubtedly, principle of corbelling has been followed here, as the

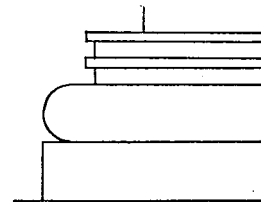
ADHISHTHANA OF GARBHA-GRHA



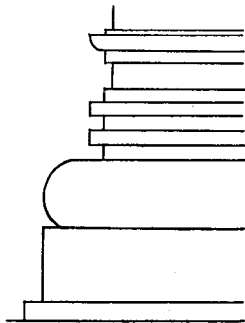
NEMAM
NIRAMANKARA TEMPLE



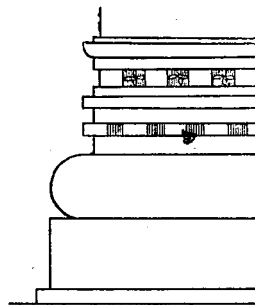
TIRUNANDIKARA
NANDISVARA TEMPLE



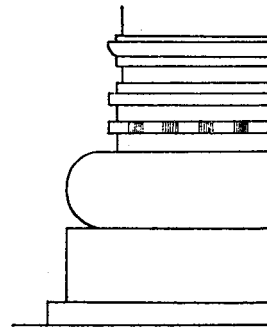
MANIYUR
SUBRAHMANYA TEMPLE



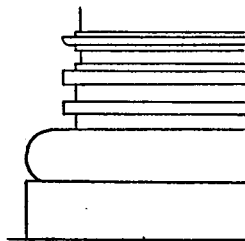
PERUVANAM
IRATTAYAPPAN SHRINE



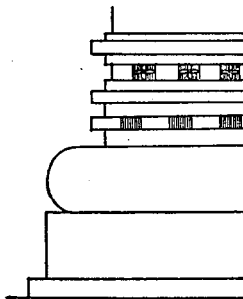
VENGANELLUR
TIRUVEMBILAPPAN TEMPLE



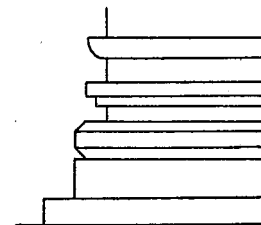
TIRKAKARA
VISHNU TEMPLE



TRIPAYAR
RAMA TEMPLE



TRICHUR
VADAKKUNNATHA SHRINE



KIZHAVELLUR
VAMANA TEMPLE

FIG. 13

tall spire has correspondingly a hollow interior. Perhaps for such constructions, the square interior has to be transformed into an octagon at the mid-height, and then into a circle.

The shrine-interiors of the Kerala temples present some more notable features, quite unique in conception and arrangement. It is not known when the circumambulatory paths in Kerala temples were rendered non-functional, but the general layout of the interior may tend to show its accessibility to votaries in some period or the other. In the Middle phase there is sometimes more than one ambulatory around the *garbha-griha*, and these are distinct from the uncovered processional path around the *Śrī-kōvil*. The most characteristic feature is the occurrence of columns in the processional path around the sanctum. For instance, the Śiva temple at Ettumanur (fig. 64), District Kottayam, has a row of fourteen columns, laid in a circle, around the square *garbha-griha*. In the Śiva temple at Peruvanam, District Trichur, two rows of pillars—the first having twelve and the second row sixteen—have been arranged all round the square sanctum. The peripteral conception is absent in square temples enclosing the miniature *vimāna*. It is generally found in the circular examples, with a few notable exceptions. Mention has already been made of the Śiva temple at Tirunillai where no column has been used in the interior; further, in the Śiva temple at Pulpatta, District Kozhikode, the miniature *vimāna* is circular both internally as well as externally, and that too, without any pillar inside (fig. 44).

In apsidal shrines also we find more than one circumambulatory around the apsidal sanctum which should normally have a *śikhara* of the same shape. The Subrahmanya temple at Payyanur (fig. 66) and the Sadāśiva temple at Mangalapadi (fig. 67), both in District Cannanore, have two ambulatory paths but these are without any column. Two rows of pillars, however, divide the *mukha-maṇḍapa* in front of the Sadāśiva temple into five bays. But the peripteral arrangement in the interior of the Vāmana temple at Kizhavellur (fig. 51), District Kottayam, may nevertheless be compared with that in the circular temples. Here a row of twelve columns surrounds the inner sanctum, apsidal from base to the *śikhara*. Another interesting variation can be seen in the Kālasamhāramūrti temple at Triprangod (fig. 32), District Malappuram, where the apsidal *sāndhāra-prāsāda* is enclosed by a peristyle resting on an apsidal *upapīṭha* which, incidentally, appears to be the original *adhishṭhāna* of the temple.

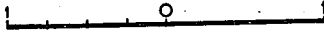
7. MINOR FEATURES

A. GENERAL

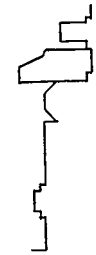
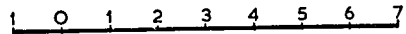
Under this head we propose to discuss about some minor architectural components like the *sōpāna*, *praṇāla* and *balipīṭha*. As these are made of granite, there is a possibility of their having retained the original form, and hence, providing useful data for the history of their evolution. Various *śilpa*-texts have also dealt elaborately with the construction of these parts, which, in course of time, evolved into artistic components. In the temples of Kerala, these are the parts where some decorative carvings occur as regular features.

TYPES OF PRAṆĀLA

SCALE OF METRES



SCALE OF FEET



UTTARAMERUR :
KAILĀSANĀTHA



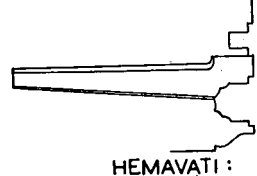
TAKKOLAM :
JALANĀDEŚVARA



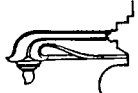
BIKKAVOLU :
NAKKALA GUḌĪ



BHIMAVARAM :
BHĪMEŚVARA



HEMAVĀTĪ :
DODDĒŚVARA



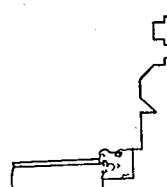
SENDALAI :
SUNDARĒŚVARA



TIRUCHANAMPUNDI :
ŚADAYĀR KŌVIL



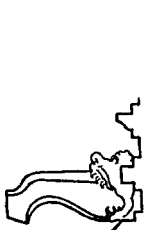
PUNJAI :
NALTUNAI IŚVARA



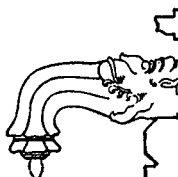
ATTIRALA :
PARAŚURĀMEŚVARA



HAMPI :
HĒMAKŪṬAM GROUP



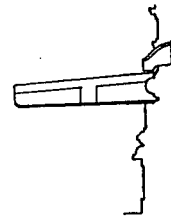
KĀNYAKUMARĪ :
GUHANĀTHASVĀMĪ



HAMPI :
HAZĀRA RĀMA



TRIBHUVANAM :
KAMPAHAREŚVARA



SCALE OF METRES 0 2 4 6
SCALE OF FEET 0 4 8

THANJAVUR :
BRIHADĪŚVARA

FIG. 14

B. THE SŌPĀNA

In the construction of the *sopāna* or stair-case, the granite has been widely used. It is associated not only with the main entrance or entrances but also with the inner *Drāviḍa*-shrine representing the *garbha-griha*. The one associated with *garbha-griha* has frontal stair-case but the main entrance or entrances (*dvāra-mukha-sōpānam*) may have either frontal or lateral flights of steps. Yet the most important component of *sōpāna* is its *hasti-hasta* or 'elephant trunk' rail on either side, bearing some carving or the other. In central and northern Kerala, such *hasti-hastas* contain merely a standing figure of lion, but in south Kerala, one sees beautiful scenes of dance, portrayed in graceful pose. The dance-scene (pl. XII C) occurring on the granite *phalakas* of the subsidiary Gōvardhana shrine in the Kṛṣṇa temple-complex at Tirukkulasekharapuram is an example noted for liveliness and elegant execution. Likewise a scene of pot-dance delineated on a *hasti-hasta* banister of the Subrahmanya temple at Kidangur (pl. XLI B), District Kottayam, is indeed an excellent piece of art, endowed with suppleness and fine mobility. Dance-scenes apart, the *hasti-hasta* banisters of south Kerala bear also representations of deities, including dancing Śiva (pl. XLIII B). The trend infiltrated into Kerala in the trail of Chōḷa contact; and it is, in fact, Kerala that witnessed its phase of maturity and efflorescence also. But the practice of carving the representations of gods and goddesses reached its zenith in the Late phase of Kerala's temple-architecture. Some of these carvings have been described in the next chapter dealing with the art and iconography.

Before we end this section, mention must be made of the occasional use of the elephant-shaped banisters in Kerala, the like of which is noticed for example in the Gaṇapati temple at Quilon (p. 235). That this type assumed popularity in later times is evident from its occurrence at sites like Palampet, Warangal, Lepakshi etc. in Andhra Pradesh, Gingee, and Cheraamahadevi in Tamil Nadu; and Hampi, Sringeri, Karkala etc. in Karnataka. Its earliest appearance in the far south is at Darasuram, built by Rājendra II (1146-1163), followed by the Kampaharēśvara temple at Tribhuvanam, both in District Thanjavur—the last-mentioned complex coming into existence during the reign of Kulōttuṅga III (1178-1218). In Tamil Nadu, this art-motif might have, therefore, gained some currency during the latter half of the twelfth century. Perhaps its popularity increased with the spread of the Vijayanagara hegemony over south India.

C. THE PRAṆĀLA

(Figs. 14-15)

The *praṇāla* or water-chute for draining out lustral water, specially from the sanctum, was in the beginning just a *chhidra* or a hole used as the *ambu-mārga*. In course of time this simple ritualistic need was transformed into an excellent architectural member; in Kerala, sometimes even the *mukha-maṇḍapa* is associated with a *praṇāla* or water-chute. A casual study will unravel its line of evolution from a simple device born out of exigency to an

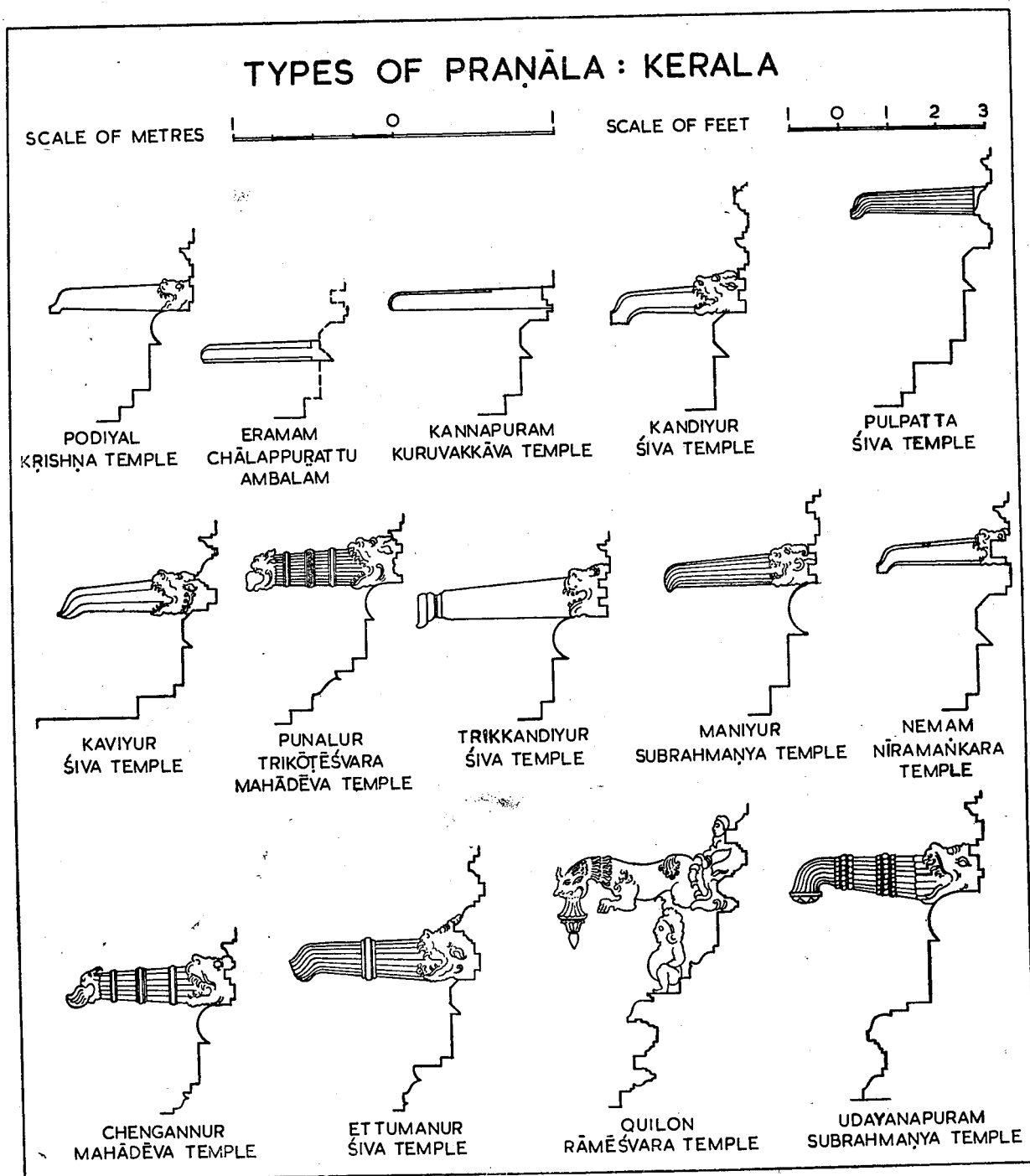


FIG. 15

elaborate motif in temple-architecture. That this development followed some chronological pattern will be evident from the following discussion.

During the Pallava period the *praṇāla* was just a channelled stone, some trace of which is still extant in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchī, built by Rājasimha (800-830). In all the temples some *ambu-mārga* or the other is available: the most elaborate of such arrangements can be seen at the Tālagiriśvara temple at Panamalai, District South Arcot. The one noticed in the Kailāsanātha temple at Uttaramerur, in District Chingleput, of later Pallava origin, is in the shape of a channelled stone, with an oblique cut at the end, simulating a lip, for easy flow of *abhishēka* water. Yet the Jalanādēśvara temple at Takkolam, District North Arcot, built during the time of Aparājitavarman, Pallava (885-903) has a unique type of *praṇāla* resembling a couchant dwarf figure. It may well be compared with a similar representation in the Airāvatēśvara temple at Darasuram, District Thanjavur, where the secondary *ambu-mārga*, connecting the main one, has the shape of a *bhūta*-figure. The conception of ornamental *praṇāla* seems to have been derived from the Eastern Chālukyan tradition because the temples at Bikkavolu, in District East Godavari, have gargoyles in the form of a *vyāla*'s head or *simha-mukha*, without any channelled shaft. The Bhīmēśvara temple at Bhimavaram, District East Godavari, and the Bhāvanārāyaṇa temple at Bapatla, District Guntur, have similar device for letting out the lustral water. In the Sōmēśvara temple at Kolar, Karnataka, can be seen identical type of *praṇāla* whose slightly evolved stage is present in some of the temples at Pushpagiri, District Cuddapah. The last-mentioned example represents a stylized crocodile-shaped shaft held in the *vyāla*'s mouth and also ends in a *simha-mukha*. It is worth-noting that the Chēnnakēśava temple at Yerragudipad, District Cuddapah, the nucleus of which may date back to the time of the early Telugu-Chōḍas, has a *praṇāla* in the shape of a crocodile.

It is evident from the above that the two early types of *praṇāla* are: (i) channelled stone with a lipped terminal, and (ii) the *simha-mukha* and the crocodile-shaped variety of the Telugu-speaking areas. Now, some of the early Chōḷa temples like the Champāpati Amman temple at Sayavanam, Saḍayār-kōvil at Tiruchanampundi and Śiva temple at Tirukkattupalli, all in District Thanjavur, have *praṇālas* in the form of a curved stone issuing out of the *simha-mukha*. Perhaps the motif represents the fusion of two trends—the Pallava and the Eastern Chālukyan. Examples from the Naltuṇai-Īśvara temple at Punjai, Divyājñānēśvara temple at Koviladi, both in District Thanjavur, and Pīṇikēśvara temple at Tiruverumbur, in District Tiruchchirappalli, represent just a curved stone without the *simha-mukha*.

In the Middle Chōḷa phase, the sharp curvature at the end and the lipped extremity were very much pronounced but the most notable development was the positioning of a dwarf at the end of the *jalāyana*; now every *praṇāla* was to emanate invariably out of the *simha-mukha*. In some specimens faceted shaft replaces the ordinary one. The simple channelled type gradually evolves into fluted variety terminating in a decorative lotus-bud, a development quite in consonance with the rise of the *pushpa-pōtikā*. It has been shown elsewhere that the *pushpa-pōtikā* made its appearance towards the close of the third quarter

of the twelfth century while *praṇāla* ending in a lotus-bud developed some time in the middle of the thirteenth century.¹

The evolution of *praṇāla* reached its climax in Kerala. According to the *Tantrasamuchchaya* (*paṭala* II, 22) it must have ornamentations such as the pearl-strings, creepers and armlets encircling the *śuṇḍu* ('elephant-trunk'). Further, it should issue out of the *vyāla*- or *śiṃha-mukha* and end in *gō-mukha*. But some of the early temples of Kerala have a much simpler variety comparable to that of the Tamil country. The Chalappuṣattu-*ambalam* at Eramam and Kuruvakkāvu temple, both the temples being of the Mūshika origin, have straight long channel without a defined lip, not to speak of *gō-mukha*. A plain, faceted stone with a lipped channel occurs in the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram and the Kīlataḷi Śiva temple (pl. XVI C) at Cranganur. In the *praṇāla* of the Mahādēva temple at Kaviyur, one comes across the device which may be termed as *gō-mukha* but the one associated with the Śiva temple at Kandiyyur is analogous in every respect to the type widely-prevalent in the Chōḷa country from the time of Rājendra I onwards. Here the *praṇāla* has a curved profile similar to that of the Guhanāthasvāmī temple at Kanyakumari or the Saumyanāthasvāmī temple at Nandalur, District Cuddapah. In fact, this type became common in the temples built during the time of Rājendra I and his successors; even Darasuram and Tribhuvanam temples are no exception. Of the Kerala temples, Niramāṅkara temple at Nemam and Valiaśālai, in District Trivandrum, Peruntirukovil at Udayamperur, District Ernakulam, Kṛishṇa temple at Tirkodittanam, District Kottayam, etc. have yielded similar type of *praṇāla* with a curved lower part of the channel. Many of these examples do not show any bands so common in the *praṇālas* of Kerala. However, the beginning of the ornamental type can be seen in the Vāmana temple at Kizhavellur, District Kottayam, where the channelled shaft has facets but no flutings; moreover, it has plain bands and a lipped lower extremity. That the flutings appeared in the Middle phase can be affirmed from the *praṇāla* of the Subrahmaṇya temple at Maniyur, District Cannanore. The latter example is without any decorative band though it ends in a lip in the shape of *gō-mukha*. Similar *gō-mukha* motif is available in the *praṇāla* of the Śiva temple at Avattattur, District Trichur, though it betrays the employment of simple bands.

In the last stage of its evolution, *gō-mukha* was replaced by *śiṃha-mukha* and *padma*, the latter either in the shape of a flower or as a bud. A few instances of this kind of *praṇāla* may be cited here. The Mahādēva temple at Poretam, in Kottarakara Taluk, of District Quilon, has a highly decorative *nāla*, which ends in full-bloom lotus—as usual the fluted shaft, with ornamental bands, emanating from the *śiṃha-mukha*. Straight *śuṇḍu*-shaped *praṇālas* ending in *śiṃha-mukha* and also coming out of the *śiṃha-mukha*, have been noticed in the famous Viṣṇu temple at Perunnayil, District Kottayam, and the Trikoṭēśvara temple at Punalur (pl. XLV B), District Quilon. Both these temples are ascribable to the Middle phase though it cannot be established if the surviving specimen is the original

¹H. Sarkar (1974), *op. cit.*, pp., 54-55.

one. Still more interesting example comes from the Śāstā temple at Sasthankotta, District Quilon, in which the *simha-mukha* at the end holds the curved stalk of the lotus bud. Almost analogous motif can be seen in the Narasimha temple at Chengannur, District Alleppey. The curved fluted *praṇāla* terminating in a lotus bud is found at a number of temples in south Kerala and in the Suchindram temple. A variant of this type is in the form of a very long fluted shaft issuing out of the mouth of a rearing lion, shown in its most vigorous mood; this type of representation is noticed in the Rāmēśvara temple at Quilon (pl. XLVII B). Its exact counterpart is noticed at the Bhaktavatsala temple at Chēranmahadevi, District Tirunelveli, and Sundararājaperumāl temple at Alagarkovil, District Madurai. Even in such ornamental types, the *ambu-mārga*, in most cases, is an exposed channel, mildly grooved longitudinally along the fluted surface. From the Middle phase onwards, the *bhūta*-figure shown in multitudes of poses, had become virtually an inseparable complement to the *praṇāla*; some of the poses of the dwarf figures have been described in the next chapter.

D. THE BALIPĪṬHA

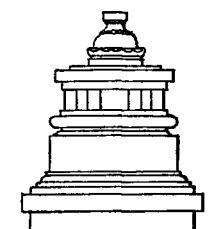
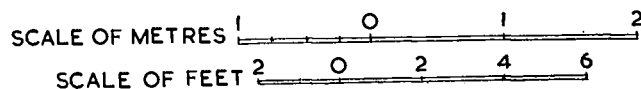
(Figs. 16-17)

The *dhvaja-stambha* and *dīpa-stambha*, occurring generally in south Kerala are, by no means, a common feature of Kerala's temple-architecture. It seems that many of them, specially those built in durable material, must have come up in recent times. There are, in fact, epigraphical references to show that many of the *dhvaja-stambhas* are of recent origin. To cite an instance, the flagstaff of the Ānandavallīśvara temple at Kollam was erected in Kollam 1067.¹ On the other hand, *balipīṭha* is associated with the Kerala temples possibly from the very beginning. It is common in Tamil Nadu and Kerala but occurs sporadically in Āndhra. In all probability, *balipīṭha* is not associated with any architectural tradition of the north. But in superficial appearance, some of the *balipīṭha* types recall to one's mind the votive *stūpas* of Nepal. In the temples of far south, it certainly constitutes an important feature, and, as the term suggests, it is a *pīṭha* or platform for offerings to the deities. Most of such *pīṭhas* are small, inconspicuous stone objects but the main *balipīṭha* in front of the main entrance is an impressive architectural member. It emerges in south Indian temple-architecture as early as the time of the Pallavas, for it is found in the Shore temple at Mahabalipuram. But its architectural refinement reached its apogee only during the time of the later Chōḷas, as is evident from exquisitely ornate specimens from the Airāvātēśvara temple at Darasuram, near Kumbakonam, and the Naltuṇai Īśvara temple at Punjai, District Thanjavur.

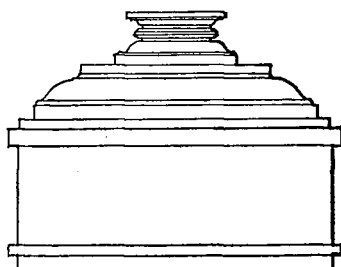
In Kerala, *balipīṭha* of the hour-glass variety constitutes the principal type. Yet it had its beginning in the Pallava period itself in the Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl and Airāvātēśvara temples at Kanchi. Attempts have been made in these specimens to provide a constricted

¹ Annual Report on Epigraphy 1895, no. 257.

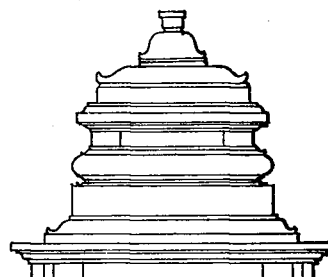
BALIPĪTHA IN SOUTH INDIAN TEMPLES



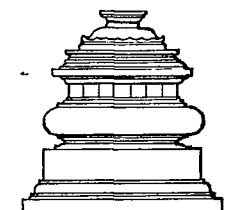
KANCHIPURAM
AIRĀVATĒŚVARA TEMPLE



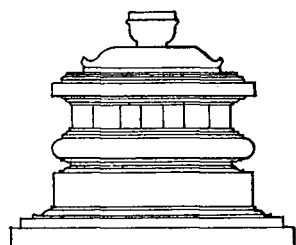
MAHABALIPURAM
SHORE TEMPLE



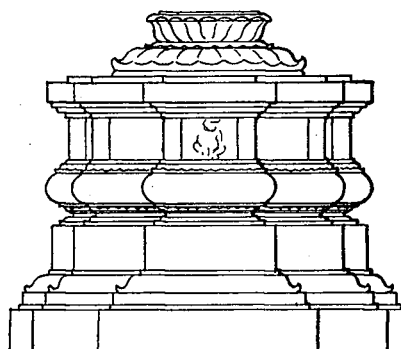
TRIBHUVANAM
KAMPAHARĒŚVARA TEMPLE



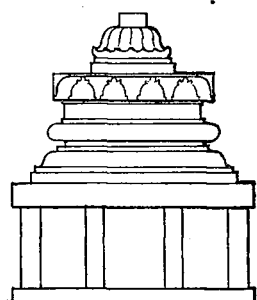
UTTARAMERUR: SUNDARA-
VARADARĀJAPERUMĀL TEMPLE



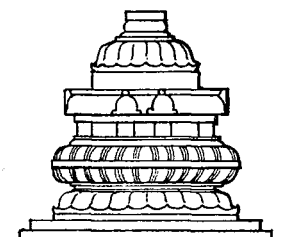
THANJAVUR
BRIHADĪŚVARA TEMPLE



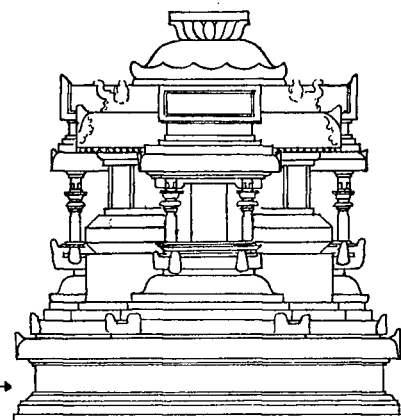
TIRUKKOYILUR
TRIVIKRAMASVĀMĪ TEMPLE



KANCHIPURAM
VAIKUṆṬHAPERUMĀL TEMPLE



HAMPI
KRISHNA TEMPLE



DARASURAM
AIRĀVATĒŚVARA TEMPLE

FIG. 16

middle part, which was later transformed into high *kaṇṭha*. The *balipīṭha* in the former consists of an *upapīṭha*, with a tall, pilastered *kaṇṭha*, a full-fledged *adhishṭhāna*, including a *kapōta* with *kūḍus*. Above this *kapōta* comes a bulbous *adhō-padma*, and a *prati* over it. Normally, the mouldings of the *adhishṭhāna* of a temple and the mouldings of a *balipīṭha* are, more or less, identical and a difference between the two may even indicate alteration due to later renovation in either of them.

One of the earliest inscribed *balipīṭha* in Kerala is from Perumpaladur, near Trivandrum, and it has a very high but narrow *kaṇṭha*. Other mouldings include *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal-*kumuda*, *kampas*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*, the topmost member being an inverted *padma*. The inscription on the *balipīṭha* is dated to A.D. 867 when Karunandaḍakkaṇ was on the Āy throne. By far the largest number of *balipīṭha* in Kerala has the *kapōta*-moulding below the actual *padma-pīṭha*. There are some noticeable decorative elements in the *kaṇṭha* or the constricted part. For instance, the one in front of the Trikōtēśvara temple at Punalur, District Quilon, also an inscribed (A.D. 1245-46) specimen, has the *kaṇṭha* divided into two by means of a *paṭṭikā*. In all such examples, the idea is that of a small platform having a high *adhishṭhāna*, but there is another development of *balipīṭha* conceived as a miniature shrine. Thus, the *balipīṭha* made of laterite, at Eramam (fig. 35), the Mūshika temple-site, portrays *ghana-dvāras* in the narrower middle part. Here the mouldings comprise *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampa* and *paṭṭikā*. Above the *adhishṭhāna*, the wall showing the *ghana-dvāra* has been shown schematically. The *balipīṭha* in front of the Vaḍakkunnātha temple at Trichur expresses the same idea though the form is highly ornamental.

The *balipīṭha* in Kerala temples held an important position, and in later times a *maṇḍapa*, known as *balikkal-maṇḍapa*, was raised over it. In the Late phase, this *maṇḍapa* has been transformed into store-house of sculptures executed mostly in the Nāyaka idiom. The Ādikēśava-perumāḷ temple at Tiruvattar, District Kanyakumari, the Janārdana temple at Varkkalla, District Trivandrum, and the Śiva temple at Vaikam are examples of this category. Admittedly, the idea of *balikkal-maṇḍapa* attained popularity mostly in south Kerala.

8. THE PHASES

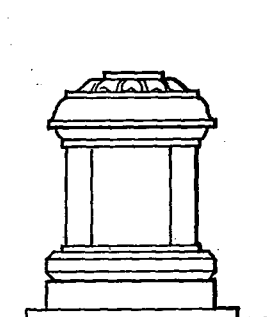
A. GENERAL

The history of Kerala's temple-architecture covers at least a millennium, and it is but natural that architectural trends during such a long span of time should have undergone several changes. References have already been made in the foregoing pages about the developmental aspects but here it is proposed to collate, perhaps at the risk of some repetition, all the relevant information. For evolving a chronological scheme, reliance has been placed mostly on inscriptional data, but wherever evidences of sculptural art are available dates based on stylistic considerations have also been taken into account.

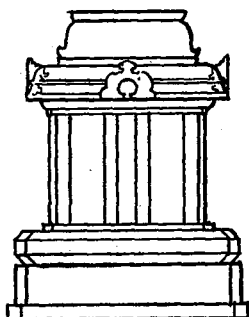
Kerala is fairly rich in temple-inscriptions ranging in dates from the tenth to the nineteenth centuries. Once the dates of these epigraphs are plotted on a graph, one finds

BALIPĪTHA IN KERALA TEMPLES

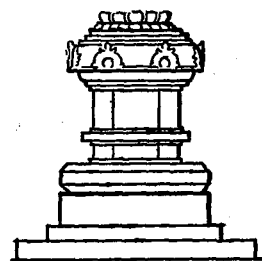
SCALE OF METRES 1 0 1 2
SCALE OF FEET 2 1 0 2 4 6



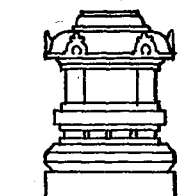
RAMANTALI
NĀRĀYAṆKANNŪR
TEMPLE



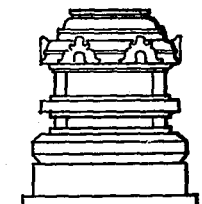
PARTHIVASEKHARAPURAM
PĀRTHASĀRATHI TEMPLE



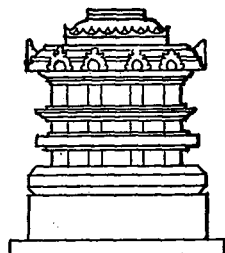
PUNALUR
MAHĀDĒVA TEMPLE



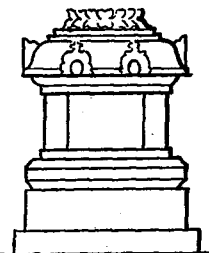
TIRUVALLAM
PARASURĀMA
TEMPLE



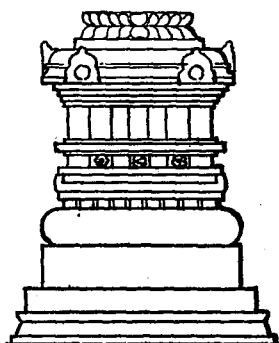
SUCHINDRAM
STHĀNUNĀTHA-
SVĀMĪ TEMPLE



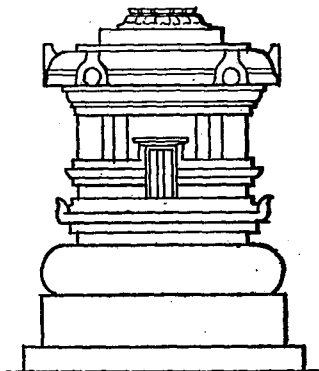
VETTIKAVALA
KṚṢṆA TEMPLE



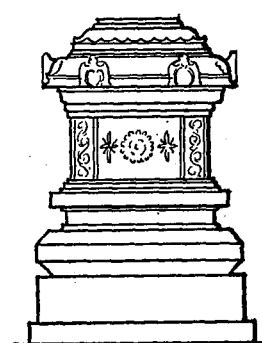
TRIVIKRAMANGALAM
VIṢṆU TEMPLE
TRIVANDRUM



TRICHUR
VAḌAKKUNNĀTHA TEMPLE



PERUVANAM
ŚIVA TEMPLE



TIRUVATTAR
ĀDIKĒŚAVAPERUMĀḷ
TEMPLE

FIG. 17

clearly three peaks corresponding to the periods of three intensive temple building. Accordingly, the following phases may be worked out:—

Early phase:	A.D. 800-1000
Middle phase:	A.D. 1001-1300
Late phase:	A.D. 1301-1800

The temple-building activity was greatly accelerated in the Late phase indicating economic prosperity in the wake of commercial intercourse with the Arab world and the European powers. The beginning of this phase also saw the reawakening of the *Bhakti* movement, possibly as a reaction to the new religious tenets of the Islam and Christianity. Like other phases, it was marked by some new developments, and the basic features of each period may be summarized as follows.—

B. THE EARLY PHASE (A.D. 800-1000)

The temple-architecture of the Early phase is represented by temples built variously on square, circular and apsidal ground-plans. Oblong or rectangular plan was also in vogue to enshrine the images of *Sapta-mātṛikās*. Side by side, there must have existed hypaethral temples, with a stone representing Bhagavatī placed below some tree. Apart from the Mother Goddess, the worship of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Kṛishṇa and Śāstā was prevalent. Both *nirandhāra* and *sāndhāra* temples were in vogue—the *sāndhāra* temples adapting only the traditional mode of construction. Many extant temples of the phase have four functional openings, thereby conforming to the *sarvatōbhādra* type of the texts. For wall decorations, generally the Pāṇḍya method of providing recesses and projections with false niches has been followed. But the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram is the only exception, as it contains *d va-kōshṭhas*, with images still intact. The idea of *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* never attained any popularity, and the typical layout of this phase consists of sanctum, which may or may not be fronted by a detached *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* and a cloister, known as *nālabalam* enclosing it. Thus, the emphasis was laid only on the sanctum and not on any accessory pillared hall. In square temples, sometimes, specially in the Chēra country, a narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa* projects out of the larger sanctum. So far as the apsidal and circular temples are concerned the space in front serves as the *mukha-maṇḍapa* but it has no independent existence once it is viewed from outside. Thus, the temples of Kerala from the very beginning lack the conception of a well-defined *antarāla* or *ardha-maṇḍapa*. It may be noted here that the temple building of this phase was patronized by the three major ruling dynasties—the Āys, the Chēras and the Mūshikas.

C. THE MIDDLE PHASE (A.D. 1001-1300)

The temple-architecture in Kerala, in the Middle phase, showed several developments specially in the interior-arrangement; and some of the features are unique in the annals of south Indian architecture. Temples have been built on square, circular, apsidal and rectangular plans as in the previous phase but there is a possibility of the elliptical plan

making its debut now, because the deserted basement in front of the Mahādēva temple at Chengannur, District Alleppey, is clearly elliptical in outline. Yet the emergence of a developed type of *sāndhāra* arrangement in shrine-interiors marks a definite departure from the earlier attempts. Now the *āntara-bhitti* stands for the wall of a miniature Drāviḍa *vimāna* serving as the *garbha-griha*. For that matter, many temples of this phase reveal the fusion of typical Drāviḍa tradition with the indigenous Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style—the latter forming, as it were, its outer cover.

Yet another distinguishing feature of this phase is the presence of more than one *pradakṣiṇā-pātha*, known locally as *suṭṭu-nāḍi*, around the *garbha-griha*. In many instances of circular and apsidal temples, row or rows of columns run along the ambulatory. This peripteral conception is absent in the square plan. Generally, the inner shrine of a circular temple is square on plan, both internally and externally, but there are examples where it has circular outer plan modified into a square in the interior, as in the Mahādēva temple at Kaviyur or the Śiva temple at Tirunillai. Again, the inner shrine, having a circular plan both inside and outside, has been noticed in the Śiva temple at Pulpatta, District Malappuram. In the case of square temple, the *garbha-griha* is invariably square, while the apsidal temple houses only an apsidal *garbha-griha*. Sometimes as noticed in the Nandiśvara temple at Tirunandikara, District Kanyakumari, the inner shrine consists of a *garbha-griha* and a projecting *mukha-maṇḍapa*.

Temples of the *sarvatōbhadrā* type continued to be built but some interesting developments in respect of the number of doors of a particular shrine can also be noticed. For instance, temples with two or three doors and correspondingly one and two *ghana-dvāras* respectively were built in all probability in this phase. The Vaḍakkunnātha shrine in the Vaḍakkunnātha temple-complex at Trichur, the Rāma temple at Triprayar, the Iraṭṭayappaṇ shrine in the temple-complex at Peruvanam and the Mahādēva temple at Uliyannur (District Ernakulam), all ascribable to the eleventh century on epigraphical evidence, have three functional openings in their circular ground-plan. Again, the Koḍavalam Viṣṇu temple at Pullur (District Cannanore) and the Śiva temple at Tirunelli in the Wayanad forest (District Cannanore), also of the eleventh century, have just two doors—one in front and the other at the rear of the square shrine. The practice of enshrining the consort of a god at the back of the *garbha-griha* must have received great fillip in this period.

Among the square shrines, the most notable development is the construction of a temple similar to the idea of the *māḍakkōvil* of the Tamiḷ country. The Māḍattilappaṇ shrine in the Peruvanam temple-complex is an example of this kind. In this type, the temple has been raised on a high solid platform, followed by the first *tala* of the shrine; consequently, the *garbha-griha* can be approached by a long flight of steps. The temple is also important in that it has an octagonal *śikhara* instead of square; moreover, it is a three-storeyed *vimāna* of a very imposing height. It is also noteworthy that this shrine has no *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* thus suggesting that in this phase as well the provision of placing a detached *maṇḍapa* in front did not constitute an essential feature of Kerala's temple

architecture. To cite another example, the Śiva temple at Sukapuram, District Malappuram, does not also reveal the existence of any *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*.

Two other characteristics of this phase, briefly speaking, are the practice of placing a *bhūta* figure near the *prāṇāla*, and carvings on the *hasti-hasta* banisters depicting dance-scenes, both inspired by the Chōḷa plastic tradition.

D. THE LATE PHASE (A.D. 1301-1800)

The temple-architecture of Kerala now reached its final stage of evolution, both in dimensions and exterior embellishments. A vast majority of the extant temples belong undeniably in this phase in spite of the fact that many of them owed their inception to an earlier period. Little development took place so far as the general plan of individual shrines is concerned, nor was there any further development in the shrine-interiors. But the layout of the entire complex must have grown into greater elaboration and complexity. It is worth-while to describe here the layout of a fully developed Kerala temple.

In the most evolved architectural scheme, the main shrine or shrines may constitute the nucleus around which the other components like the open-air *pradakṣiṇā-patha*, the cloistered *nālambalam*, *viḷakkumāḍam* affixed with a galaxy of lamps, paved outer *pradakṣiṇā-vari* and *prākāra* or *prākāras* revolve round in a concentric manner. As a rule, the central shrine is fronted by a square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* with a pyramidal superstructure. In some temples, specially in south Kerala, one may find another pillared structure, the *balikkal-maṇḍapa* in front of the *vaḷiambalam*, a wing of the *nālambalam* providing the main entrance into the temple. Facing the *balikkal-maṇḍapa*, which houses the principal *balipīṭha*, stand the *dīpa-stambha* and, in some cases, *dhvaja-stambha*. Close by, in bigger complexes, one may see a large edifice, *kūttambalam*, meant for dance, musical performance and other recitals. These *kūttambalams* are storehouses of fine wood-carvings devoted to *Purāṇic* and epic themes. In larger temples, the outer *prākāra*, which may enclose the temple-tank, *teppakuḷam*, is pierced on all the four sides by *gōpura*, with multiple roofs duly covered with tiles. During the seventeenth century, lofty enclosures, sculptured corridors and ornate *balikkal-maṇḍapa* in some temples practically concealed the view of the main temple. Belonging to this stage of development is the Sthāṇunāthasvāmī temple at Suchindram where the main shrine of the respective units is hidden behind the vast quadrangular enclosure. At Tiruvattar, the open outer *pradakṣiṇā-patha* of the Ādikēśavaperumāḷ temple, which is rectangular on plan, has been converted into a covered passage having two hundred and twenty-two columns, each carved with *dīpa-lakṣmī* and other reliefs (pl. LXX). In this period, some of the *balikkal-maṇḍapas* like the ones belonging to the temples at Tiruvattar, Suchindram, Vaikam, Varkkalla and others have been transformed into gallery of sculptures (pls. LXXI and LXXII), beautifully executed in the Nāyaka idiom.

There are, however, definite evidences to show that a large number of temples was built in this period itself. These edifices share features typical of the Kerala style, though combined with certain traits then universal in the temple-architecture of the south. Both

Drāviḍa and Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa styles were in vogue side by side as was the case with the earlier two phases.

So far as the ground-plan of the shrine proper is concerned, the temples of this phase conform to square, circular, apsidal, rectangular and even elliptical plans. The *sāndhāra vimānas* with one or more *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* dominated the temple-architecture. In most of the examples, the *garbha-griha* is a miniature Drāviḍa-*vimāna*, now built invariably on a square plan, having an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*. In circular temples of larger dimensions like the Śiva temple at Ettumanur, generally a small portico, within the limits of the same circumference, has been provided for the first time. Most of the square temples do not show much recesses and projections, notwithstanding their continuance in the Tali temple at Kozhikode and the Subrahmaṇya temple at Udayanapuram, District Kottayam. Both have highly ornamental walls built on a square plan. As stated earlier, circular and apsidal temples, though they bear decorative elements like *tōraṇas* or *kuḍya-stambhas*, do not have any projections and returns.

The apsidal shrine continued to be built, as exemplified by the Subrahmaṇya temple at Payyannur, District Cannanore. A number of small apsidal shrines dedicated generally to Ayyappaṇ or Śāstā came up in the bigger complexes outside the main cluster. The Ayyappaṇ shrine (longer axis 15 ft or 4·57 m) in the Vaḍakkunnātha temple-complex at Trichur belongs to this group. Yet the majority is virtually semi-circular on plan, comprising only the *āditala* with a *gaja-prishṭha* roof. In rare cases, it rises to a height of three storeys as in the case of the Mahālingēśvara temple at Aduru, District Cannanore. The smallest apsidal shrine measuring 9 ft 8 in × 9 ft 8½ in (2·95 m × 2·96 m) is the Śiva temple at Chennamangalam, District Ernakulam. Incidentally, it is not the smallest in south India, for the Gaṇēśa shrine at Chilamakuru, District Cuddapah, Andhra Pradesh, measures 9 ft × 6 ft 9 in (2·74 m × 2·06 m).

The Śiva temple at Vaikam, District Kottayam, appears to be an elliptical shrine, with an elaborate interior-arrangement.

In the Districts of Kottayam and Alleppey, there is a preponderance of wooden temples built on granite *adhishṭhāna*. Walls are carved minutely with scenes from the epics and the *Purāṇas*. Wooden *dvāra-pālas* and bracket figures, apart from the murals, enjoyed greater popularity. Timber-roofs were covered with copper-sheets, and all such roofs have bevelled edges to protect it from getting damaged due to falling of rain-water. Interestingly, the ends of rafters and beams have often been covered with metal rafter-shoes, embossed with figures of various deities (pl. LXVII). The tradition of stone-sculptures rose to great heights as is evident from the reliefs and pillar-decorations in the *balikkal-maṇḍapa*: they display many local features though grafted on the Nāyaka tradition. However, the minute ornamentation of the sculptures of Kerala bear similarity with the Hoysala tradition of Karnataka.

The *adhishṭhāna* remains as simple as before except in a few cases. In the Rāmēśvara temple at Quilon, the ornamental *adhishṭhāna* stands on an equally ornamental *upapīṭha* and its *hasti-hasta* banisters are also in tune with the basement and the *nāla*. Its *nāla* is indeed a unique example as the shaft or the *śuṇḍu* is replaced by a full outstretched body of a *simha*

which in turn issues out of a *siṃha-mukha*. It has an exposed *jalāyana* ending in a curved lotus-bud instead of *gō-mukha*, an evolution in conformity with the development of the *pushpa-pōtikās*. Thus, apart from straight *suṇḍu*-like *praṇāla*, one comes across a type, common in Tamil Nadu in the contemporary period, ending in a lotus bud.

A few words must be said about the architecture of the *gōpura* of the Malabar coast. Compared to Tamil Nadu, the *gōpuras* of Kerala are insignificant in height and dimensions. Yet they are endowed with grace and nobility, and the architects of Kerala have never allowed them to outshine the temple proper. Like the temples, these are also built of laterite and wood. Roofs are made of tiles, and rise to a height of three *talas* over the gateway. Sometimes, we find the use of reverse eaves here but the commonest use of such wooden eaves is in the *balikkal-maṇḍapa* of small proportions.

It has been pointed out more than once in this section that the last phase witnessed the revival of the *Bhakti* cult. Emergence and popularity of multi-shrined complexes are the result of this spiritual movement spearheaded by several literary giants. As a result, the same complex often houses the shrines for Śiva, Viṣṇu and Bhagavatī, besides subsidiary ones. It seems, at the same time, that in some complexes, the shrine for Ayyappaṇ has been located outside the *nāḷambalam*. Similar arrangement has been adapted in the Rāma temple at Triprayar and the Vaḍakkunnātha temple-complex at Trichur. It may tend to show that amongst certain sections of the people in Kerala, Śāstā or Ayyappaṇ, who is a village-god in Tamil Nadu, lost his former position and prestige.

9. INFLUENCES

In this section we propose to trace out the various strains of influences that combined themselves in the indigenous matrix to give rise to a new style, a new personality to south Indian temple-architecture. Undoubtedly the Kerala style of temples were influenced on one side by Pallava-Pāṇḍya-Chōḷa tradition, and on the other by the Chālukyan. The roof over the *mukha-maṇḍapa* of a Kerala temple copies in every respect the idea of *śuka-nāsa* of the Chālukyan temples. Similarly, the arrangement of columns in *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* follows the Chālukyan convention of concentric alignment. The cult of *Sapta-mātrikās* possibly penetrated from the Chālukyan country, while the idea of rectangular shrines came from the Maitraka tradition of Gujarat. Even the arrangement of placing the *garbha-griha* in the centre of a square *sāndhāra* temple seems to have been inspired by the Gop temple of Gujarat or the Gupta tradition. No less important is the contribution of the Āndhra region, specially the country of the Nōḷambas, because the apsidal shrine and some of its variants might have come to the west coast from that direction. Lastly, the Hoysala art of Karṇāṭaka also moulded considerably the final form of Kerala's plastic tradition.

In the development of circular shrines, two trends seem to have merged here: the earlier one from northern India and the subsequent one from the Buddhist tradition of Śrī Laṅkā. The *padma-pādukās* and the idea of dentils as decorative motif of the *adhishṭhāna* might have diffused also from the north.

Surprisingly, the idea of diminutive shrine fronted by a larger *maṇḍapa* never reached Kerala. On the other hand, the temple-architecture of Nagarjunakonda, datable to the third century, followed this character, which was possibly adapted in the early Gujarat, Orissan and Chālukyan traditions. Like the Pallavas and the early Pāṇḍyas most of the temples of Kerala have larger sanctum preceding the *maṇḍapa*. It is not unlikely that this was derived from the classical tradition of the Guptas, for the Pārvatī temple at Nachna Kuthara belongs to this category. A good number of temples in Kerala are without any projecting *maṇḍapas*, and even this feature might have come ultimately from a Gupta tradition.

All this constitutes very remote relationship between the classical and the Drāviḍa tradition. It was the latter which moulded the style and form of the temples of Kerala. Of the Drāviḍa tradition, again, the lower Drāviḍadēśa, generally ruled over by the Pāṇḍyas, cast a tremendous influence on the art and architecture of Kerala. In the use of wall-decoration, with sham *vimāna-kōshṭhas*, and in the popularity of octagonal *śikhara* one may perhaps sense the influence of the Pāṇḍya country. It was followed by the impact of the Chōḷa plastic art, yet by that time Kerala had evolved its own style by synthesizing various architectural elements. Its greatest achievement is the harmonious blend of Drāviḍa temple with the indigenous Kerala idiom in which both the compositions could still maintain their individual entities.

CHAPTER IV

ART AND ICONOGRAPHY

1. INTRODUCTION

Not much is known about the beginning of Kerala's sculptural tradition. Admittedly it was the rock-architecture (above, pp. 43-49) that provides one of the earliest examples of sculptural art in the form of high reliefs. They occur generally on walls of the *antarāla* or, in rare cases, of sanctum. Images of Buddha constitute another series which overlaps chronologically with the Brāhmaṇical sculptures in the cave-temples. Interestingly, the available evidence shows a contemporaneity of the Jaina vestiges with the art associated with the structural temples of Brāhmaṇical origin. Here we are concerned with the last-mentioned category as it constitutes an inseparable part of the temple-architecture.

Besides stone-sculptures, there are images made also of metal, wood and stucco. Both metal and stone-sculptures of Kerala date back to the Early phase but extant stucco figures do not go beyond the Middle phase. It does not necessarily mean that the images made of stucco were not known earlier. Similarly, the absence of wood-sculptures in the Early and the Middle phases need not be taken as a proof of their non-availability in these periods. The climatic condition is certainly not conducive for the preservation of wood, being exposed to alternate heat and rain of extreme degrees. So far as ivory-carving is concerned, no example prior to the eighteenth century is available although some authorities claim to have found its references in Biblical and Classical works.¹ Of course, like the metal images and objects, these are not directly associated with the temple-architecture, and strictly speaking, do not fall within the purview of the present study.

Another important decorative element of Kerala's temple-architecture is the painting which assumed wide vogue in the Late phase. There are attempts to ascribe the murals of the Tirunandikara cave to the Early phase² but these remnants, like the rock-excavation itself, belong to the Pāṇḍya phase of rock-architecture (below, p. 49). The structural temples of Kerala's Early and Middle phases are devoid of any painting although the trend was at its heights in the Pallava temples of Kailāsanātha at Kanchi and Tālagiriśvara at Panamalai. Besides the murals, the artists have made use of paintings for decorating wood-sculptures as well as clay or stucco-figures, the latter series enjoying great popularity in Tuḷunāḍu.

¹ Robert Caldwell (1956), *op. cit.*, pp. 88-91.

² Stella Kramrisch, Cousins and Poduval (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 177.

Thus the Early phase of art of Kerala is characterized by the use of stone sculptures which are available in the other two phases also. But the early sculptures, taken collectively, hardly reveal any distinctive trait, for they appear to be the products of the art of the lower Drāviḍa-dēśa. Most of the sculptures are of granite but some successful attempts in the use of laterite are also not wanting.

2. STONE-SCULPTURES

A. EARLY PHASE

Sites of some of the early structural temples have yielded sculptures that may be dated either to the eighth or the ninth century. For example, the Kīlataḷi Śiva temple, near Thiruvanchikulam, exposed images of *Sapta-mātrikās* datable to the ninth century on stylistic considerations. Apart from *Sapta-mātrikās*, the images of Śāstā and Viṣṇu have been noticed in different parts of Kerala. All such images are in granite, a material popularized in the south by the Pallavas and the Pāṇḍyas.

Images in dēva-kōshṭhas (pls. XII A and B).—As stated earlier there are images also of laterite; and it is the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram which provides the best specimen of this series. Barring the Anantapuram temple (p. 198), and the wooden temples (p. 120), this is the only temple having figures in the *dēva kōshṭhas* but their identification is not easy; they may well be taken as guardian deity. These images, six in number, are enshrined in the niches of the *kapōta-pañjaras* of the *hārāntara*-recesses between the *bhadra* and the *karṇa* : they are standing two-armed images carved out of the laterite blocks. On the southern wall, in the niche to the proper right stands, in the *tribhaṅga* posture, a beautiful two-armed figure with an early type of *jaṭā-maṇḍala* and ornaments. Other sculptures in the *dēva-kōshṭhas*, two on each of the three walls, are also in the *tribhaṅga* pose, with left hand resting over the *kaṭi* and the right hand upraised. Quite understandably, the headdress differs in each case. Despite the fact that the stucco has considerably masked their original contours, they still possess a graceful form and lively stance, so common in the plastic tradition of the eighth and ninth centuries throughout south India. Oddly enough, none of the figures are associated with any *vāhana* or attributes.

Sapta-mātrikās (pls. VB, XV, XVI B and XLVIII A).—Mention has already been made about the discovery of stray images (p. 60) originally belonging to some *Sapta-mātrikā* panel or the other. So far no intact panel or group showing all the *Mātrigaṇas*, inclusive of Gaṇēśa and Virabhadra, has been discovered. As a result, we are not sure about the number of the *Mātrikās* in different contexts. Doubtless they are usually seven, and it is just possible that the number may be eight or even less or more. In the Rājarājēśvarī temple at Polali and the Virabhadra temple at Udiyavara, both in South Kanara, Karnataka, only three or four *Mātrigaṇas* have been enshrined in the sanctum. The clay images of Kaumārī, Vaishṇavī and Māhēśvarī grace the *garbha-griha* of the Virabhadra temple.

Stone and bronze sculptures are also not unknown in which the number of the *Mātrikās* is only three, and they are usually Brahmāṇī, Kaumārī and Vaishṇavī.¹

Of the sites yielding *Sapta-mātrikā* images in Kerala, the most important is the Kodungalur-Thiruvanchikulam area. In fact, the Kīlataḷi Śiva temple has brought to light two sets of *Sapta-mātrikā* images—the earlier one being housed in the Trichur Museum. At the site proper are to be seen a seated Gaṇapati (pl. XIV A), made of dark grey granite, and three other images of some seated deities, extant only below the waist. These three mutilated figures must belong to a *Sapta-mātrikā* group. Pertaining to the same group is the image of Gaṇapati, definitely an early piece. It is a seated four-armed image, wearing a headdress in the form of conical *jaṭā-bhāra*, which is quite ornate. Further, there is a small *śiraśchakra* behind its head. The trunk, in natural form, is turned to the left (*iḍampuri*) and a snake is worn as the *upavīta*. Seated on an ornamental *pīṭha*, its attributes in four different hands are as follows: the right arm holds a fruit and the left one a *pāśa*, which is shown as a thick circular cord with its ends dangling down, while the other two arms are broken. That the image had a *prabhāvalī* attached to it is evident from the extant right half. In all probability, these images may be dated to the late ninth century on stylistic considerations. These are perhaps comparable to the *Sapta-mātrikā* group from Ullal or Koteswar in Tuḷunāḍu. If that be the case, the group from the Kīlataḷi temple comprised seven Mothers, besides Gaṇēśa and Vīrabhadra. Another group of *Sapta-mātrikā* images, but very much defaced, can be seen as rejects in the temple precincts of the Vaḍakkunātha at Trichur. The group may also belong to the same period.

There are five *Mātrikā* images of relatively larger size in the Trichur Museum, and these are said to have been recovered from the compound of the Kīlataḷi temple. The group, carved out of dark brown granite, appears to be earlier than the above-mentioned series. Perhaps these images have to be dated to the early ninth century. One of the figures of this series is that of Dakṣiṇāmūrti (pl. XV A), seated on a *pīṭha*. The deity wears a large *jaṭā-bhāra*, *patra* and *makara-kunḍalas*, thick *upavīta*, *valayas*, wristlets, anklets and an *udara-bandha* of beads. Its left leg hangs down, while the right is folded. Two arms at the back are broken and the two front ones rest on the knee.

The seated *Mātrikā* images (pls. XV B, C, and XVI B) are possibly those of Brāhmī, Vaishṇavī and Kaumārī. Brāhmī has as usual three heads having *jaṭā-bhāras* and wears a thick *upavīta*, two *makara* ear-rings and anklets. Her two front hands are placed on the knee, of which the right hand carries some object. Of the two back hands, the right one is broken, while the left hand seems to be associated with *pāśa*. The figure identified as Vaishṇavī is more ornate than the rest and has anklets and toe-rings. Unfortunately, only its torso has survived, and even the back hands are lost. The deity is shown wearing *chhanna-vīra* of beads and *kucha-bandha*. All the arms and the left leg of the image, identified

¹ J. N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography* (Calcutta, 1956), p. 505. In the Chālukyan inscriptions the number of the Mothers is seven which is echoed also in an Āḷupa inscription from Polali, South Kanara, of the time of Chitravāhana I (A.D. 680-730). See K. V. Ramesh (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 62.

as Kaumārī, have gone. She has *jaṭā-bhāra* and globular ear-rings, apart from the broad *chhanna-vīra*. The other *Mātrikā* figure in the Museum is represented only by its lower half. Thus, there are altogether four *Mātrikā* images and the figure of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, all seated in the same posture and having identical hand-poses. All of them have a height of about 40 inches, with slim body marked by attenuated waist.

A subsidiary shrine in the Bhagavatī temple-complex at Kodungalur contains a much defaced image of a *Mātrikā*, known popularly as Vasūrimālā ('garland of small-pox'). Originally the image belonged to a *Sapta-mātrikā* panel and most likely it is a figure of Chāmuṇḍā datable stylistically to the eighth century. Evidently it is the earliest of the three groups discovered in Kodungalur-Thiruvanchikulam area.

Two other sites—Nīramaṅkara temple at Nemam and the Bhagavatī temple at Viliṅjam—also yielded stray images of some *Mātrikā* or the other. Those from Viliṅjam may fall more or less in the same period as that of Chāmuṇḍā from Kodungalur. On one of the sides of the *sōpāna*, leading to the rectangular Bhagavatī temple at Viliṅjam, is placed an image, originally forming part of a *Sapta-mātrikā* panel. It appears to be Kaumārī seated in the *ardha-paryāṅkāśana* (pl. V B). She has two arms and wears *upavīta*, necklaces, bangles, bracelets and anklets. One of the hands is in the *kaṭi*, while the other in the *varada* pose. The other image (pl. V C), though a male diety, is in the same pose but has a *jaṭā-bhāra*; it is perhaps an image of Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Undoubtedly these sculptures belong to the eighth century.

In the compound of the Nīramaṅkara temple at Nemam is to be seen an image of Brāhmī with four hands and three faces (pl. XLVIII A). The image is very much defaced but seems to be nearer in style to the group now exhibited in the Trichur Museum. It may, therefore, be dated to the early ninth century.

Thus it is evident from the foregoing that the *Sapta-mātrikā* images were available in the eighth and the ninth centuries throughout the west coast. The cult possibly spread to this region from the Chālukyan country because the early Chālukyan kings are described in their inscriptions of the sixth and seventh centuries as the off-spring of Hārītī and nurtured by the Seven Mothers (*Hārītīputrāṇām sapta-lōka-mātrībhiḥ Sapta-Mātrībhiḥ*).¹ Significantly, the concept of *Mātrigaṇas* is absent in the rock-architecture of the Pallavas in spite of the fact that their representations occur in the cave-temples of the Pāṇḍyas and Muttarayars.² In the Pallava country, images of *Sapta-mātrikās* appear for the first time in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kanchi, which have been built in the first quarter of

¹ It is worth-noting that before the Chālukyas of Badami, some earlier dynasties like the Chuṭu-Sātkaṇṇi and Kadambas of Vanavāsī claimed themselves as Hārītīputras of the Mānavya *gōtra*. See G. Yazdani (ed.), *The Early History of the Deccan*, pts. I-VI (London, 1960), p. 205. The Chālukyan inscriptions also mention their kings as being nourished by the Seven Mothers who are the mothers of the seven worlds. See, for instance, *Epigraphia Indica*, XVIII, pp. 258; it belongs to the reign of Pulakēśin II.

² K. R. Srinivasan, 'Some aspects of religion as revealed by early monuments and literature of the South', *Journal of the Madras University*, XXXII, no. 1 (July, 1960), pp. 154-55.

the eighth century. The Pallavas continued to patronize the cult till the beginning of the tenth century as testified by the evidence of the Viraṭṭanēśvara temple at Tiruttani, built by Aparājitavarmaṇ Pallava. But this group follows clearly the Chālukyan mode of depicting the *vāhana* on the pedestal, a practice absent in the stone-tradition of the west coast as well as in the Tamiḷ country. However, on the basis of the present evidence, we may consider some of the examples of the west coast as anterior to those found in Tōṇḍaimaṇḍalam and Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam. It is quite likely that images of *Sapta-mātrikās*, without the *lāñchhana* were in vogue in ancient Chēra or the Āy country and it was this very trend which may have simultaneously influenced the Pallava tradition. It is noteworthy that the facial features of the early series from the Kiḷataḷi temple are, to some extent, similar to the Muttarayar idiom. Perhaps there existed some close link between the two assemblages of plastic art.

Vaishṇava images (pls. VIII A, XXIV, and XLI C).—There cannot be any doubt that both Śiva and Viṣṇu were worshipped alongside the other deities like Bhagavati, Subrahmaṇya, Śāstā and so on. Śiva was worshipped in his aniconic form though we do not know of the existence of any *līṅga* ascribable to this phase. Two images of Viṣṇu ascribable to the Early phase have been brought to light in the course of the present survey. One of them (pl. VIII A) comes from a sub-shrine in the Mahādēva temple-complex at Kazhakkuttam, District Trivandrum. Installed in a Viṣṇu shrine, which is located on the north-eastern corner of the complex, the image has four arms, and stands in the *sama-bhaṅga*. It has several early features. Its long *vastra*, with a medium ridge, hangs down to the midway between the knee and the ankle. A tassel, arranged in semi-circular fashion, comes down from the thick *kaṭi-sūtra*. Its back hands hold *śaṅkha* and *chakra*, and the front hands are without any attribute; the left one is in the *katyāvalambita-hasta*, while right appears to be in the *varada* pose. The *upavīta* runs over the right arm, thereby suggesting a very early medieval date of the image. All the four hands have *kaṭaka-valayas* and also *kēyūras*. The *mukuta* is conical in shape, with a knob-like *śikhā-maṇi* on top. Stylistically, the image is datable to the early ninth century. To repeat, this *sthānaka-mūrti* of Viṣṇu comes from the Āy country, which must have also had early shrines, at least theoretically speaking, for reclining Viṣṇu (above, p. 64). The nucleus of the Padmanābhasvāmin temple at Trivandrum, sung by Nammāḷvār, belongs to this phase.

The other Viṣṇu (pl. XXIV), also in the *sama-bhaṅga*, comes from Eramam, in the ancient Mūshika kingdom. It is a beautiful four-armed image, executed in the plastic tradition of the lower Drāviḍa-dēśa. Compared to the previous one, the image is slightly more ornate, with *prabhāvali* at the back and highly decorative *vastra* reaching right up to ankle. Beaded tassels, loops of the *vastra* and *kaṭi-sūtra* are quite attractive. Its *udara-bandha* also contains some decorative motif; even the *kēyūras*, *hāras*, *upagrīvā* and *kuṇḍalas* show definite ornamental features. All the arms have *kaṭaka-valayas* and the fingers have *pavitra*-rings. Two back hands hold *śaṅkha* and *chakra* in the fashion of the Tamiḷ country; the right hand is in *katya-valambita* pose, and the part of the left hand is broken. Here also the *upavīta* runs over the left arm but the purpose of the long garland coming down to the

knee is not known. Considering all these early features, the image may be ascribed to the early tenth century.¹

To the two above-mentioned Viṣṇu images may be added a third one (pl. XLC I) which is known to the scholars since several decades. It is the famous Viṣṇu image from the Nīramaṅkara temple at Nemam, District Trivandrum. Admittedly, it is one of the finest artistic creations within the present political boundary of Kerala. Being a fine *sthānaka* image, in the *sama-bhaṅga*, with four arms, its two back hands carry *śaṅkha* and *chakra*, whereas the front left is in the *kaṭi* and the other hand is in the *varada* pose. All the hands have *kaṭaka-valayas* and *kēyūras*, with *hāra*, *upagrīvā*, *upavīta* and a thin *udara-bandha* over the body. The *vastra*, practically reaching the ankle, is adorned with *kaṭaka-valaya*. Its *kaṭi-sūtra* and various loops are quite ornamental.

Generally the image is dated to the fourteenth century, and Kramrisch describes it as follows: 'In this image of the fourteenth century the spirit of Kerala has found a complete form through the medium of Drāviḍa conventions. Broad and weighty, but without heaviness are the body and limbs of this image. The magnificence of the image is in its proportions, where the high pillar of the crown attracts wheel and conch; symbols above the hands of the God they surround the majesty of his face.'² Basis on which the image has been dated to the fourteenth century is not known. It has neither any mature Chōḷa nor post-Chōḷa features that will justify its dating to such a late date. The present temple-site is no doubt late but the occurrence of the Brāhmī figure of about the ninth century (above, p. 106) may indicate the existence of some earlier structure here. Indeed, stylistically the image of Viṣṇu is not far removed in point of time from the Brāhmī discovered at the site. In view of these evidences, the Viṣṇu may also be dated to the same period.

Śāstā (pl. XXIII A).—*Śāstā*, also known as Ārya or Hariharaputra, is peculiar to south India. He is said to have been born of the union between Hara and Hari when the latter took the form of Mōhini.³ The myth might have been invented to make his way into the Brāhmaṇical pantheon, and there are also scholars who take *Śāstā* as of Buddhist origin.

The worship of *Śāstā* is still a living cult in Kerala, and practically every important temple-complex here has its south-western corner earmarked for him. There are innumerable temples like the ones at Sabari-malai, Sastankotta etc. dedicated exclusively to *Śāstā* or Ayyanār. In such complexes he holds a pre-eminent position. But he seems to have been relegated to a place of secondary importance in temple-complexes like the Rāma temple at Triprayar and the Vaḍakkunnātha temple at Trichur. At the same time, it has to be accepted that he holds now a much exalted position in Kerala region compared to Tamil Nadu where he is a village deity. On the other hand, a large number of *Śāstā* images

¹ H. Sarkar, 'The Cālappurattuambalam at Eramam: a ruined temple of the Mūshikas of north Malabar', *Journal of Kerala Studies*, I, nos. 2 & 3, pp. 173-75. The view expressed there has been modified to a little extent in these pages.

² Kramrisch, Cousins and Poduval (1970), *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

³ T. A. Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, II, pt. II (Madras, 1916), p. 487.

have been recovered from the Tamiḷ country, specially from the Chōḷa-maṇḍalam. All this tends to show the gradual decline in the popularity of this cult which must have been in vogue as early as the sixth-seventh century, a fact testified by its explicit reference in the *Dēvāram* hymns.¹

However, to return to the main theme. The image under discussion is ascribable to the eighth century and is perhaps one of the earliest known stone images from the south. It comes from the Ramantali temple, and like most of the early Śāstā images in Tamil Nadu it is not enshrined in any temple. Executed in hard granite, it bears close stylistic affinity with the figures from Viliṅjam (above, p. 106).

It is a two-armed image, seated in the *yōgāsana*; its right hand is broken while the left hand rests on the knee. The *jaṭā-maṇḍala* is rather peculiar in that it consists of thick ringlets spreading out on both sides. It has a calm and serene face with drooping eyelids. The right ear has *patra-kuṇḍala*, and left one having either a *ratna-kuṇḍala* or some other variety. According to the prescription of various *śilpa*-texts, *kuṇḍalas* worn by Śāstā are not identical for both the ears. He wears a *vastra*, the folds of which are clearly seen; further, it has a simple *kaṭi-sūtra*, apart from *udara-bandha* and the *upavīta*. It wears on the neck not only *hāra* but also *upagrīvā*, whereas *kēyūras* and *kaṭaka-valayas* adorn the arms. Seated on a *pīṭha*, it portrays successfully the figure of Śāstā as a *yōgī*.

Gaṇēśa (pl. XIV B).—We have already referred to the occurrence of Gaṇēśa (p. 105) along with the *Sapta-mātrikā* images. An isolated image of Gaṇēśa was noticed in the compound of the Kaṇṇēśvara temple at Kavur, District Kozhikode. Originally, it might have belonged to a panel of *Sapta-mātrikās*, the traces of which are now completely lost. The image is considerably defaced, but it is clear that it is a four-armed seated figure in *iḍampuri* pose. The *mukuṭa*, *upavīta*, *udara-bandha*, *hāra* and other ornaments are quite discernible. In all probability, the image may be ascribed to the ninth century, when the worship of the *Sapta-mātrikās* attained great popularity.

It is evident from the above that Kerala has definitely an early phase of sculptural art which is basically an extension of the plastic tradition of the lower Drāviḍa-dēśa. The phase lasted from about the eighth to the tenth century, and by and large, overlaps with the period of rock-sculptures in Kerala.

B. MIDDLE PHASE

The sculptural art of the Middle phase shows the popularity of relief sculptures, along with the sculptures in the round. Of the latter category, the number of available examples is only a few, and we propose to describe them first before we pass on to the reliefs. The sculptures in the round may be divided broadly into two types, viz., images and dwarf figures. Images include figures of Viṣṇu, Bālakṛiṣṇa, Subrahmaṇya and Śāstā. The following are the brief descriptions of some of the images.—

¹ Marguerite E. Adiceam, *Contribution a L'etude D'Aiyānār-Śāstā* (Pondicherry, 1967), p. 6.

Vaishṇava images (pls. VIII B, XXIII B, and XLIX A).—Of the Vaishṇava images ascribable to this group, the earliest is the standing figure of a Bālakṛishṇa (pl. XXIII B) enshrined in a subsidiary shrine of the Nārāyaṇkaṇṇūr temple at Ramantali, District Cannanore. It is a two-armed image, its left hand being broken. The right hand holds a butter-ball in the open palm, and is shown wearing simple *kēyūra* and *kaṭaka-valaya*. It is depicted without any *vastra* but wears a girdle of tinkling bells, *hṛīṇmālā* and *upagrīvā*. The hair-style is peculiar in that the knotted hair is shown behind the *mukuṭa*. Stylistically, the image may be dated to the thirteenth century but it is devoid of any expression and artistic quality. In facial features certain indigenous character is also discernible.

A standing four-armed image of Viṣṇu (pl. VIII B) datable stylistically to the thirteenth century comes from the sanctum of the Viṣṇu temple from Atiyannur, District Trivandrum. It is in the *sama-bhaṅga* pose with *śakṛīha* and *chakra* in the back hands, while the *mudrās* of the front hands are not very clear; the front right, however, may be in the *kaṭi*. The *vastra* is elaborate with broad *kaṭi-sūtra* and *ūru-dāmas*; the *udara-bandha* is quite inconspicuous compared to the *upavīta*, *hāras* and *upagrīvā*. Traces of *skandha-mālā* are to be seen, and the *kēyūras* and *valayas* are not at all ornamental. On the whole, the image retains all the characters of the art of the Drāviḍa-dēśa belonging to the time of the later Chōḷas. After this period the local idioms started asserting its distinct form and features, possibly mingled with the impact of the Hoysala tradition from Karnataka.

An image of Viṣṇu (pl. XLIX A) in the compound of the Kṛishṇa temple at Podiyal is carved in an altogether different idiom. It is rather short in height like the Hoysala images and has a *prabhā-valī* around the head, adorned with *kirīṭa-mukuṭa*. Many of its features are blurred due to bad preservation in an open-air structure. Its face is full of lively expression: a smiling face, invested with calmness and beatitude. Standing in the *sama-bhaṅga*, its lower left hand holds a club, not to be seen in earlier examples. In all probability, it belongs to the thirteenth century.

Subrahmaṇya (pls. XXXI A, XXXIV C, and XLVIII B).—The cult of Subrahmaṇya was prevalent even in the earlier phase but no image could be ascribed to that period. But there are some Subrahmaṇya images that may definitely be attributed to the Middle phase, and the most prominent of them and at the same time the earliest is the mutilated figure (pl. XXXI A), now enshrined in the *garbha-griha* of the Subrahmaṇya temple at Maniyur, District Cannanore. Its modelling is as excellent as the bronze image kept by its side. In all likelihood, it is a two-armed image, wearing conspicuously the *chhanna-vīra* and the *udara-bandha*. It will not be far wide of the mark if the image is dated to the eleventh century.

Images of the Middle phase display marked influence of the imperial Chōḷa tradition and it is indeed a widespread phenomenon. Yet it is more pronounced in the south than in the north, and some of the inaccessible *sanctum-sanctorum* must be enshrining such images as well. One such image (pl. XXXIV C) was noticed in the *garbha-griha* of the Subrahmaṇya temple at Vellanad, District Trivandrum. It is also a two-armed image standing in the *sama-bhaṅga*; one of the hands is in the *varada* pose while the other is in the *kaṭi*. On stylistic grounds the image may be dated to the eleventh century.

From central Kerala, in one of the ruined shrines at Tenari, District Palghat, is installed an image of Subrahmaṇya (pl. XLVIII B) ascribable to the closing years of the thirteenth century when the influence of the late Chōḷa idiom spread in different parts of the south. The image is also a mutilated one, but is not under worship, at least when the site was visited.¹ It is a four-handed image in *sama-bhaṅga*, and has a *prabhā-valī*, which forms part of the *tōraṇa*-arch attached to the figure, now inserted into a *pīṭha*. Its two back hands carry *kukkuṭa*(?) in the left and *śakti-āyudha* in the right, whereas front right is in the *varada* and the front left in the *kaṭya-valambita* pose. Compared to the image in the *garbha-griha* of the temples at Maniyur and Vellanad, the one from Tenari lacks natural poise and grace characteristic of the mature Chōḷa tradition.

Śāstā (pl. XXXI B).—The image of Śāstā from the Subrahmaṇya temple at Maniyur is datable to the twelfth century. Unlike the example from Ramantali, the image is portrayed in an altogether different mood. Seated on a *pīṭha* it has been shown in the *vīrāsana*. Śāstā here is an expert in the *Vēdas*. He wears a very conspicuous *jaṭā-maṇḍala*, with its each plait showing innumerable knots. Even the short *vastra* displays knotted design which may signify woollen cloth. There are *kēyūras* and *kaṭaka-valayas* in both the hands. Further, he wears *ratna-kuṇḍala* in the right ear and *patra-kuṇḍala* in the left. The image has been placed outside the temple, a practice followed widely in Tamil Nadu.

In the modelling of this figure one notices the expression of virility but to take it as a product of Chōḷa tradition is fraught with some problem. For, its facial character, with prominent lips and eye-ridges, stands in contrast to the general Chōḷa style. It may indicate the gradual assimilation of the local trends in the Chōḷa tradition. Significantly, the sculpture is free from any impact of the Hoysala art.

Dvāra-pālas (pl. XLI A).—A few figures of *dvāra-pāla* datable to this phase are also extant. These are generally tall and graceful figures compared to the short and stumpy ones of the succeeding phase. The *dvāra-pālas* (pl. XLI A) of the Viṣṇu temple at Trivikraman-galam, District Trivandrum, and those of the Śiva temple at Peruvanam, District Trichur, and the Navamukunda temple at Tirunavaya, District Malappuram, are representative types of this phase. They occupy, as usual, places on either side of the main entrance, and are shown standing on the coils of the snake. Its one of the legs entwines the club, and the other resting on the hood of the snake. The coil of the snake in turn is placed on a lotus seat which is carried, as it were, by a *gaṇa*-figure.

Bhūta-gaṇas (pls. XXXIX A, B and XL A).—In the architectural tradition of the Imperial Chōḷas, the *praṇāla* was transformed into an artistic component of the temple. Of course, its beginning can be noticed in the later Pallava temple at Takkolam.² But, the Middle Chōḷa tradition introduced a *bhūta*-figure below the *praṇāla*, the image remaining detached from the water-chute. This very trend travelled to Kerala where it

¹ September 23, 1969.

² Rock-cut devices simulating rain-water pipes in the form of *bhūta*-figures are to be seen in the Dharmarāja-ratha at Mahabalipuram.

became more widespread than in the land of its origin. *Bhūta*-figures in various poses and moods have been placed below the *nāla* which, in Kerala, ends more often into a *gō-mukha*, *padma* or *sinha-mukha*. Associated with the Rāma temple at Triprayar is a standing image of *bhūta-gaṇa* (pl. XL A) in the pose of blowing the conch. It may be dated to the eleventh century, specially in view of its association with the eleventh century *adhish-thāna* of the temple.

The dwarf figure of the Rāma temple at Triprayar does not possess any artistic quality. On the contrary, two such images (pls. XXXIX A and B) from the Vaḍakkunnātha temple at Trichur merit special mention because of the fine workmanship, elegant pose and superb facial expression. One of them is just a seated figure with its arms resting on the knee. It is, as if, carrying the load of the *śuṇḍu*-shaped *praṇāla* on the head. The other one from the Rāma shrine is in the dancing pose, with one of the hands upraised. Its face beams with smile and happiness, and it may be taken as one of the finest artistic creation of the Middle Phase. The *praṇālas*, however, may be of later date.

Bas-reliefs (pls. XII C, XLI B, XLII, XLIII A and XLV C).—Relief-sculptures in the temples of Kerala are confined mainly to the banisters in the form of the *hasti-hastas*, flanking the flight of steps. These carvings include various deities and dancing scenes, and must have been inspired by the neighbouring Chōḷa tradition. Some of the dancing scenes on banisters portray figures of men and women in typical Chōḷa style. One such scene (pl. XII C) comes from the subsidiary Gōvardhana shrine in the temple-complex at Tirukkulasekharapuram. Here a dancing female figure is depicted along with a drummer, also in a dancing pose. The dancing scene on the banister of the Subrahmanya temple at Kidangur, District Kottayam, is an excellent portrayal of a pot-dance (*kuḍakuttu*), a widespread dance-style of India, marked by rhythm and frantic action (pl. XLI B). Two dancing scenes (pls. XLII and XLIII A) are portrayed on the large *phalaka* of the *sōpāna* of the Trivikramangalam temple, near Trivandrum; they follow a completely different style being more akin to that of the subsidiary Kṛishṇa shrine at Tirukkulasekharapuram. The one (pl. XLII) seems to illustrate the type known as *arddha-mattalli* in the Bharata's *Nāṭya-sāstra*,¹ while the other (pl. XLIII A) is in the *prishṭha-svastika* pose.²

In some cases, deities are also carved on the *phalaka* following the Chōḷa tradition: the depiction of eight-armed Śiva, in *yōgāsana*, accompanied by Nandi, from Punalur, District Quilon, is a marvel of iconographic study (pl. XLV C). At the same time, the relief shows perfect harmony in the delineation of various subjects of the scene. Attributes, in all the eight arms, are not clear though the *śūla* and *mṛiga* are certainly to be seen amongst them. It appears to be a popular form of Śiva for it is noticed in the subsequent phase too as relief-sculpture on banisters. The other banister bears a figure of eight-armed Bhagavati, seated in the same posture as that of Śiva. The representation may be dated to the middle of the thirteenth century, when the plastic tradition of Kerala imbibed certain local features and forms.

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI p. 59.

² Kapila Vatsyayan, *Classical Indian Dance in Literature and the Arts* (Delhi, 1968), p. 359.

C. LATE PHASE

The sculptural yield of the Late phase is prolific and it requires an independent survey to assess its full extent. Nevertheless, it is proposed to give here the outline of the two main trends that made their presence felt in Kerala's temple-architecture. It is this phase that witnessed the birth of a new style after a period of gestation. Evidently, it is not a sudden outburst, but a case of gradual evolution which began towards the end of the Middle phase. So long the history of Kerala's art shared the same pattern and tendency as those of the lower Drāviḍa-dēśa, but it had now succeeded in freeing itself from any such exotic influence. It had now had its own character, marked by exuberance of ornamental detail, recalling the trends of the Hoysala art. Thus there emerged completely a new facial form with its lineaments expressing altogether a new spirit, language and convention.

The regional style, no doubt, imbibed some features from the Hoysala art of Karnataka but it reflects at the same time the influence of wood-carving because the stone-sculptures of the period infused in them former's texture and form. It is indeed the wood-carving that was responsible for giving the art of Kerala a distinctive style not only in the sphere of stone-sculpture but also in painting. The greatest contribution of the Late phase is to give the art of Kerala a new orientation in form and distinctive expression. Side by side, the Nāyaka style of art had also carved out a place of its own. Incidentally, it is doubtful if the pure Vijayanagara art-tradition ever made any headway in Kerala. But the Nāyaka tradition produced a rich harvest, specially in south Kerala, where it can easily rival in numerical strength the output arising out of the indigenous school of art. Most of the Nāyaka sculptures are to be seen in the *balikkal-maṇḍapa*, added to a temple-complex in subsequent times, and it is proposed to deal with it later after discussing the art-style of the indigenous school.

Kerala tradition (XLIII B, LI, LXII B and LIX).—Broadly speaking, the sculptural art of the Kerala tradition may be divided into two: sculptures in the round and bas-reliefs. Under the first group may be included deities, *dvāra-pālas* and *bhūta-gaṇas*. Not many deities, ascribable to the Late phase, could be examined as they are mostly under worship inside the sanctum. An image of four-armed seated Gaṇēśa from the Bhagavatī temple at Tiruvalattur, District Palghat, the image of Mahishamardinī from the Nīramaṅkara temple and a number of *vimāna-dēvatās* from the Tali temple (pl. LI) at Kozhikode may be taken as representatives of this group. In the last-mentioned temple can be seen deities like Gaṇēśa, Subrahmanya, Viṣṇu, four-armed Śiva standing below multi-headed snake, Pārvatī, Rāma, Sarasvatī and other images in stone fixed on the southern and northern walls of the projecting *mukha-maṇḍapa*. All the images are *sthānaka-mūrtis* and have somewhat stumpy appearance. The modelling is far from ideal and appears to be the combination of the Kerala style with the Nāyaka tradition. In the circumstances, these sculptures—the idea of embellishing the wall with such images is rather unique—may be dated to the late seventeenth or the early eighteenth century. Strictly speaking, these are not reliefs, as their backs are not fully detached from the slab. This mixture of two traditions is noticed in many sculptures of the *balikkal-maṇḍapas* which came up in Kerala in later times.

Quite a good number of *dvāra-pālas* or *dvāra-pālikās* may be noticed in different temples throughout Kerala. Invariably they are squat figures as if copied from some wooden prototypes. Like the figures of the preceding phase, the *dvāra-pāla*, in many instances, is shown standing on the coil of a snake, while the other leg, which also encircles the mace, touches the snake-hood. All such figures, with two arms, have protruding belly similar to dwarf figures. Moreover, frontal pose is generally preferred to the three-quarter view, the latter type being noticed in the Trivikramangalam temple, Trivandrum. It appears that the *dvāra-pālikās* do not follow the pose adapted by their male counterparts because the former have no snake-coil to stand on nor do they possess any protruding belly though the breasts are sumptuous. One of the hands of the *dvāra-pālikās* is upraised while the other one holds a club. Both *dvāra-pālas* and *dvāra-pālikās* wear minutely carved ornaments, besides the *mukūṭa*.

Some of these figures may easily be dated to the fifteenth or the sixteenth century. For instance, the *dvāra-pālikās* (pl. LXII B) of the Bhagavatī temple at Tiruvalattur, District Palghat, must be dated to the sixteenth century, as the temple was renovated by one Surēśa by that time (below, p.261). The *dvāra-pāla* figure of the Śiva temple at Tiruvarai appears to be an early example datable to the fourteenth century. Here the figure does not stand on a snake coil, and one of its legs just entwines the mace. By the side of the *dvāra-pāla* figure can be seen a seated figure of a dwarf with lovely face and fine workmanship.

As stated before, the association of *bhūta*-figure in stone with the *nāla* is a common motif in Kerala, and these are represented in various ways. Both seated and standing poses have been noticed. A favourite motif is the depiction of the *bhūta* figure in the pose of drinking lustral water from a bowl; such a representation comes from the Bhagavatī temple at Tiruvalattur, District Palghat, the Rāma temple at Thiruvillamala, the Tiruvembilappaṇ (Śiva) temple at Venganellur, and Śiva temple at Peruvanam, all the three places being in District Trichur. The other common posture is the blowing of conch as observed in the Rāma temple at Thiruvillamala (pl. LIX B), and the Śiva temple at Ettumanur. Sometimes, as in the Trikkandiyur temple, in District Malappuram, a female dwarf takes the place of the male one; in the very temple a stone with the representation of *nāga* has been used as the support to the *praṇāla*. In the Mahādēva temple at Chengannur, the shaft of the *praṇāla* rests on the head of the standing *bhūta*. At Vaikam, a standing dwarf carries the mace in one hand and in the other hand holds the *praṇāla* (pl. LIX A). An interesting portrayal of the *bhūta* figure has been noticed in the Tali temple at Kozhikode and also at Venganellur, wherein the water that the seated dwarf drinks from a bowl comes out, as it were, through the erect penis. Yet another variation is to depict the *bhūta* below a hooded snake like of which can be noticed in the Subrahmaṇya temple at Payyannur, District Cannanore. In rare cases, the *bhūta* figure is shown in the dancing pose, and such a representation, which is indeed an excellent piece of art, comes from the circular Kṛishṇa temple at Tirkodittanam, District Kottayam.

Let us now turn to the relief-sculpture that drew its inspiration from the local plastic tradition. These are carved usually on banisters flanking the *sōpānas*. In north Kerala, the general practice is to carve the figure of a lion, but in south Kerala, this particular space is

reserved for various kinds of dance-scenes and for the representations of different images. It appears that the themes on dance were popular during the Middle phase, while the representation of gods and goddesses became a favourite motif in the Late phase; the latter practice seems to have had its beginning in the later Chōḷa tradition of Tamil Nadu. A standing four-armed figure of Viṣṇu accompanied by Śrī-Dēvī and Bhū-Dēvī, besides the flying Vidyādhara, on one of the banisters, flanking the *sōpāna* of the Vāmana temple at Kizhavellur, District Kottayam, is an interesting bas-relief. Elegantly-portrayed scene of dancing Śiva from the same temple is another masterpiece of this phase (pl. XLIII B). But the beginning of the temple proper dates from the Middle phase.

Mention has been made about the occurrence of the seated eight-armed Śiva from Punalur, District Quilon. Further evolution of this regional style can be easily traced in similar representation in the Subrahmaṇya temple at Kumarapuram, District Ernakulam. One of the banisters of the Subrahmaṇya temple at Udayanapuram, District Kottayam, bears the seated figure of a four-armed Viṣṇu, revealing identical form and features. The subject-matter carved on the banisters of the Tonnal Bhagavatī temple at Pallipuram, District Trivandrum, are seated Lakshmīnārāyaṇa on the one and Umā-Mahēśvara, attended by Nandi, Subrahmaṇya and Gaṇēśa on the other. These bas-reliefs may be dated to the fifteenth century on grounds of style. Added to it, the Bhagavatī temple at Tonnal supplies some epigraphical data as well, which refer to the reconstruction of the temple in Kollam 654 (A.D. 1479).¹ It is no exaggeration to say that the real form of Kerala's plastic tradition can be seen in such representations on banisters, specially in various temples of south Kerala. These bas-reliefs have doubtless been reduced to the level of mechanical representation but some of the examples do show some amount of dynamism in lines and contours. Moreover, it constitutes an unmixed series for the study of Kerala's regional style and characteristic iconography.

Nāyaka tradition (pls. LXI B, LXV, LXXI and LXXII).—The Nāyaka tradition has a restricted sphere of incidence, for it is confined to south Kerala and that too, in temples where *balikkal-maṇḍapa* has been added to bring grandeur to various complexes. Such additions with splendid sculptural appendage can be seen in the Padmanābhasvāmī temple at Trivandrum; the Ādikēśavaperumāl temple at Tiruvattar (pls. LXXI A and LXXII), Sthāṇunāthasvāmī temple at Suchindram (pls. LXXI B and C), both in District Kanyakumari; Janārdana temple at Varkkalla (pls. LXI B and LXV) and Mahādēva temple at Valiasalai, District Trivandrum and; Śiva temple at Vaikam, District Kottayam, and so on. These additions are mostly by way of pillared *maṇḍapa* although at Tiruvattar the entire outer *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* has been covered and its columns, numbering two hundred and twenty-two, are excellently carved with handsome figures of *dīpa-lakshmī*, apart from myriads of reliefs of both secular and religious import. Equally impressive is the *balikkal-maṇḍapa*, with typical Nāyaka sculptures protruding out of the richly-carved columns: these are, in fact, architectural sculptures attaining great popularity during the late

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, p. 35. The repair commenced in Kollam 650 and reconsecration took place after four years.

Vijayanagara and the Nāyaka times. Some notable sculptures of this sort from this temple are the representations of Manmatha and Rati, dancing Śiva, Arjuna with bow and arrow, Rāma in the act of breaking the bow, Vēṇugōpāla, Śiva in his Bhikshāṭana pose and a host of other gods and goddesses. In this period, various animals, floral designs and scrolls, non-religious themes (pls. LXXI A and LXXII) like scenes of dance and other entertainments occupy conspicuous position; but natural scenery has rarely been depicted.

In sculptural content, there are only a few shrines, akin to the Kerala style of temples, that can rival the artistic wealth of the Śuchindram temple. As a detailed study of these sculptures¹ is available, suffice it here to say that the Nāyaka tradition was at its peak here. Portrait-sculptures of the Śuchindram temple constitute a fine series having no parallel in any other temple of Kerala. Those noticed in the Janārdana temple at Varkkalla are also marvellous, notwithstanding the fact that the carvings of one temple do not vary appreciably from the other in subject-matter and in the mode of execution. Columns of the *nāḷambalam*, like the ones at Varkkalla or Valiasalai, are adorned with various reliefs but the figures of *dīpa-lakshmīs* are of common occurrence among the figural art.

This tradition of sculptural art must have come into existence during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a period of Kerala's prosperity, and also of conflict with European ideals. The Nāyaka art, as is well-known, is full of vitality and sumptuousness despite rigid forms and repetitive themes. That a trend of naturalistic art had made a deep impact on it, maybe due to certain European contact, is evident from the proliferation of portrait-sculpture and from representations of various animals. Figures of drummers, dancers and scenes of secular character are invariably more naturalistic, and consequently, more appealing. Perhaps these are the best products of the Nāyaka art that flourished mainly under the patronage of the Nāyakas of Madurai; it was indeed the invasion of Tirumala Nāyaka that brought in its trail the Nāyaka tradition to Kerala.

3. IMAGES IN CLAY OR STUCCO

Images in clay or stucco are of common occurrence in the architecture of the *gōpuras* of Tamil Nadu, but Kerala has no such gateways, barring the ones that fall in the border region of the two states. So, the number of stucco images in Kerala² is only few and far between; the material seems to have a wider vogue in Tuḷunāḍu, for the Rājarājēśvarī temple at Polali and the Virabhadra temple at Udiyavara enshrine, amongst other images, huge figures of *Mātri-gaṇas*, made possibly of stucco. But are they really stucco images or examples of clay modelling? These are all coloured figures and also under worship, and hence, it is difficult to subject them to close examination. Chances are remote for their being made of baked clay or terracotta, for, as the *śāstric* injunction goes, 'except in a few

¹ K. K. Pillay, *The Śuchindram Temple* (Madras, 1953), pp. 347 ff.

² T. A. Gopinatha Rao (Madras 1914) *op. cit.*, I, p. 149 refers to the occurrence of brick-and-stucco images in the famous temples of Trivandrum and Srirangam.

cases images of gods should never be made in terracotta; if any body does so, it would bring about a calamity.¹ In the circumstances, these seated massive images may have been made either of clay or stucco. So far as the image of Ayyanār in Tamil Nadu is concerned, both brick-and-stucco (*iṣṭikā-garbha*) and clay-modelling are generally followed. Most probably, in bigger images, brick-armature is first set up, followed by clay-work. And this very technique was possibly employed in making images at Polali and Udiyavara, in District South Kanara.

A completely different technique was followed in the modelling of the *dēva-kōshṭha* image in the Anantapadmanābhasvāmī temple at Anantapur Gudda, a place which may well be considered as once forming part of Tuḷunāḍu. The *garbha-griha* here has *dēva-kōshṭhas* on all the three sides, each of them enshrining a seated figure of four-armed Viṣṇu (pl. XXXIV B). Hands are broken but it is certain that upper hands carry *śaṅkha* and *chakra*. A conical *prabhā-valī* runs around the *kirīṭa-mukuta*. Unquestionably, these are stucco images but not of ordinary type, since lime has been applied over a wooden core (*dāru-garbha*), and then beautifully painted in polychrome. Moreover, the images in the *garbha-griha* are also made of stucco, applied on wooden frame; here a seated Viṣṇu is flanked on either side by his consorts, Śrī-Dēvī and Bhū-Dēvī, apart from two other attendant figures. The image of Viṣṇu is that of Vaikuṇṭhanātha, because the dislodged serpent-hood above the god can still be seen to his left. These images, seated in *yōgāsana* on a *padma-pīṭha*, are examples of excellent modelling, and stylistically datable to the eleventh or twelfth century A.D.

4. WOOD-SCULPTURES

The wood-sculpture is a fascinating chapter in the history of south Indian art. It is still a living tradition, and there is hardly any temple in Tamil Nadu without a chariot or *ratha*, built and sculptured entirely of wood. At one time, doors and lintels of the common houses of Tamil Nadu were nicely carved, as can be surmised from some of the surviving houses in Chettinad, in District Ramanathapuram, and other parts of the state. In Kerala, wood has been used extensively in the superstructure of most of the temples but in the districts of south Kerala like Kottayam, Alleppey and Trivandrum even the walls are built of timber, and those too, carved minutely with beautiful figure-sculptures. Of such temples, special mention may be made of the Subrahmaṇya temple at Manambur (pls. LIV B and LV A), District Trivandrum, Mahādēva temple and Narasiṁha temple (pl. LVI) at Chengannur, Śiva temple at Kaviyur (pls. LVII and LVIII) and Kandiur, District Alleppey, Śiva temple of Vazhapalli, Ettumanur (pl. LXI A) and Vaikam, District Kottayam, and so on. Every *kuttambalam*, occurring mainly in central and southern Kerala, is a treasure-house of excellent wood-carvings. Further, the pyramidal *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, with its oft-repeated *nava-graha* ceiling, is also associated with magnificent wood-works. Invariably the *grīvā-kōshṭhas* are adorned with wooden images, some of them being excellent pieces of art.

¹ K. M. Varma, *The Indian Technique of Clay-Modelling* (Santiniketan, 1970), p. 5.

The wood-sculpture in Kerala has somewhat a realistic form in the sense that it has no resemblance to the original shape of the material. Here the craftsman has practically brought his creations, so to say, to the level of plastic art. The majority is coloured or was originally coloured, and it helps in hiding the wooden texture, thereby instilling greater sense of plasticity and rhythm. Like the stone-sculpture, the wood-carvings of Kerala followed the tradition of making images in the round as well as in the reliefs. The latter category may be compared with the minute and delicate execution of the goldsmith's art.

Most of the wood-sculptures have to be attributed to the Late phase. During the period, wood-carvings in the realm of crafts also reached a high watermark, as is evident from the cots in the Padmanābhapuram palace, the palanquins exhibited in the Mattancheri palace and pulpits in various churches and mosques, some of them easily dating back to the sixteenth century.

It appears that the wood-sculptures, as has been pointed out more than once, influenced the form and style of paintings, later bronzes and stone-carvings of Kerala. The minute ornamentation of wood-works, perhaps inspired by the Hoysala tradition of carving on soft chlorite schist, was successfully copied in other media; consequently, whatever might have been the material on which an artist worked, the expression remained more or less the same. Uniform pattern of encumbering the figures with jewellery and other adornments was also responsible for bringing about a rigid style pervading the various fields of art. In sum, the wooden tradition had cast a tremendous spell in shaping the form of art in Kerala in the Late phase, which witnessed, the emergence of the true Kerala style with all its bias and predilection.

Sculptures in the round (pls. XXIX B, XXIX C, LVI B and LVII A).—Under this group are the images of the *grīvā-kōshṭhas*, *dvāra-pālas* and bracket figures. It is not known if any *garbha-griha* enshrined images in wood like the famous Jagannātha temple at Puri, Orissa. Nevertheless, the images decorating the *grīvā-kōshṭhas* of a large number of extant shrines, are superb creation of the art. Occasionally, stucco images are also placed in these *kōshṭhas*, yet the general practice is to position the wooden images of Brahmā, Indra or Viṣṇu, Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Narasiṃha respectively on the north, east, south and west; all such figures are shown in seated posture. Some of the images of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, in the Trivandrum Museum, appear to be comparatively earlier in date. Apart from these seated images, the Trivandrum Museum has also standing images like four-armed Durgā on lion and Nandi with a human body. It is not known where exactly these figures were placed originally in temples.

Wooden *dvāra-pālas* and *dvāra-pālikās* are not of very common occurrence nowadays in the temples of Kerala; a few such extant images still retain the colour applied on them originally. These are mostly squat figures, but sometimes, as at Kaviyur (pl. LVII A) and Chengannur (pl. LVI B), with a lovely smiling face despite two protruding teeth. From the point of view of carving, an image exhibited in the Trivandrum Museum is noteworthy; it is really vibrant with fluent rhythm and free from any grotesque features. These examples are indeed wonders of Kerala's three-dimensional art.

Bracket figures associated with each *tala* of the temple are also examples of fine artistic tradition. The most oft-repeated motif is the stylized *gaja-vyālas* (pl. XXIX C) used also in embellishing the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. Bracket figures noticed in various temples like the Rāma temple at Triprayar, Śiva temple at Peruvanam (pl. XXIX B), the Vaḍakkunnātha temple at Trichur, the Mahādēva temple at Kazhakuttam, District Trivandrum, the Subrahmaṇya temple at Udayanapuram and the Śiva temple at Ettumanur (pl. LXI A), both in District Kottayam, the Peruntirukkōyil at Pazhur, District Ernakulam, and the Subrahmaṇya temple at Payyannur (pl. LXIII A) and the Kriṣṇa temple (pl. XXIX C) at Tricchambaram, in District Cannanore, to mention only a few, have elegantly-executed bracket figures representing various deities in interesting iconographic forms. Some of them are excellent artistic pieces comparable in every respect to the images in stone or metal. For instance, the figure of an old man bent with load, from Triprayar, mirrors the sad plight of the old age with all its pathos. Another fine example of wood-work, representing a warrior in vigorous mood, comes from the Subrahmaṇya temple at Kidangur, District Kottayam.¹ Sometimes the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes are portrayed as brackets, and of them, the most commonest theme is the depiction of Kirātārjuniya. Stylistically, these images cannot be dated before the Vijayanagara times although the idea of bracket figures in the south, surrounding each *tala* of a temple, perhaps owed its origin to the mature Hoysala tradition of Karnataka. It is worth-noting that later Hoysala temples like the Lakshmī-Narasimha temple at Nuggihalli, District Hassan, and the Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa temple at Hosaholalu, District Mandya, do not exhibit this feature.

Relief sculptures (pls. LIV B, LV, LVI, LVII and LVIII).—It is quite likely that the idea of bracket figures in various temples of Karnataka was inspired basically by a central Indian trend. Admittedly, the Hoysala temples are nearer to the northern tradition than the southern. In the case of ceilings, the Hoysala or even the later Chālukyan architects seem to have been inspired by the central Indian or the Gujarat tradition, where ceilings are really specimen of beauty and intricate workmanship. What is commonly known as the *nava-graha* ceiling in Kerala may have been derived from the Gaṅga country, and again, similar ceilings can be seen in early temples of central India.² Ceilings of this variety are divided into ten compartments and may belong either to nine planets or eight *dikpālas* with Brahmā in the coffer, each of the sunk square containing an image of a *graha* or a *dikpāla* with the appropriate *vāhana*.³ In the majority of the cases such reliefs are confined to the ceiling of the square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. Very often the *valabhī* part of the ceiling bears minute carvings, depicting scenes from the epics; a favourite theme is the

¹ For photographs of the bracket figures from Triprayar and Kidangur, see Kramrisch, Cousins and Poduval (1970), pls. LXXI and LXXVI.

² Kramrisch, Cousins and Poduval (1970), p. 33.

³ Nine planets or *grahas* are Sūrya, Śoma, Bhauma, Budha, Guru, Sukra, Śani, Rāhu and Kētu. See Gopinatha Rao (1914), *op. cit.*, I, pt. II, pp. 318-328. In developed *Purāṇic* mythology the names of the *Aṣṭa-dikpālas* are as follows: Indra (lord of the east), Yama (lord of the south), Varuṇa (lord of the west), Kubera (lord of the north), Agni (south-east), Nirriti (south-west), Vāyu (north-west) and Isāna (north-east). For iconographic details, see J. N. Banerjea (1956), *op. cit.*, pp. 519-29.

churning the ocean by the Dēvas and Asuras using serpent Vāsukī as the rope. Sometimes reliefs occur also on the architrave of the *vaḷiambalam*: one of the finest such reliefs comes from the Tiruvembilappan temple at Venganellur, District Trichur, wherein Umāsahita-Śiva as well as the Garuḍāntika Viṣṇu constitute the principal figures (pl. LV B).

Relief-sculptures are of various categories and their detailed account will involve a separate study and analysis. However, the most outstanding category includes sculptures carved on the walls of various temples like Śiva temple at Vaikam, Mahādēva temple at Ettumanur, Narasiṁha temple and Mahādēva temple at Chengannur, Śiva temple at Kaviyur, Śrī Thiruvairūr Mahādēva temple at Chunakara and so on. What is significant is that these carvings do not exhibit any sectarian bias, as both Śaiva and Vaishṇava themes found their way as subjects of wall-decorations. Generally, *Purāṇic* legends or scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* appear to have attained popularity with the carvers of the period. These reliefs at once reminds us of the influence that the *Bhakti* movement of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries exercised in shaping the course of Kerala's art and literature. The same influence is markedly manifest even on the murals of the temples and palaces.

Sculptures on the wooden wall have mostly been arranged in three vertical registers (pls. LVII B and LVIII A), while various scroll-works and floral designs (pls. LVI A and LVIII B) serve as bounding lines, placed either vertically or horizontally. Figures in the *dēva-kōshṭhas* are relatively bigger in size than those occurring in panels. It is worth-noting that wooden temples, unlike the stone ones have some sort of a *dēva-kōshṭha*, enshrining images. But the deities in the shallow niches do not follow any norm unlike the mature Chōḷa tradition. Apart from the panelled reliefs and deities in niches, there occur, as a regular feature, various kinds of minutely-carved friezes, showing animal procession and other motifs. Excellent *jālī*-works are also notable products of the wood-carvings¹ of the period, perhaps covering a time-span of about three to four centuries from the sixteenth century onwards.

5. METAL-SCULPTURES

The metal images in Kerala had their beginnings during the eighth or ninth century A.D., although in that period no regional influence could be discerned in them. Yet at no stage there had been any proliferation similar to that of the Tamiḷ country; even in quality the attainments of the Kerala artists, generally speaking, are by no means impressive. Indeed, these bronze images are creations of an atelier having its locale only in the neighbouring Tamiḷ country.

The earliest bronze image from Kerala,¹ ascribable to the early ninth century, is the standing four-armed image of Viṣṇu, exhibited in the Trivandrum Museum. Identified as Śrīnivāsa, it is a *sama-pāda* figure of not more than 16 cm height and possesses an oval face, marked by well-carved features. The *mukuṭa*, with a crowning knob, has been placed

¹ P. R. Srinivasan, *Bronzes of South India*, Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum (Madras, 1963), pp. 40, 45-46 and 353-54.

on interlaced strands of hair. It wears heavy *kuṇḍalas*, *hāras*, *kēyūras* and *kaṭaka-valayas*. The *yañīopavīta*, possibly gem-studded, passes over the lower right-arm, which is in the *varada* pose; a gem is also held in the open palm. Its lower left arm is in the *kaṭi*, and the upper hands hold *chakra* in the right and *śankha* in the left. The *vastra* comes down to the anklet and has a thick median line, besides the horizontal folds shown in regular interval. Two tassels and wide-looped sash descend down prominently from the *kaṭi-sūtra*.

In the same Museum is another standing image (ht. 32 cm), having the appearance of Viṣṇu (pl. LXVI A). Unfortunately, the attributes in the three out of the four hands are lost. But there cannot be any doubt in considering it as one of the finest and well-finished bronzes in south India. Its *kirīṭa* is adorned with golden diadems, the *paṭṭa* around the waist bears a gem instead of the usual knot, and the *kaṭi-sūtra*, too, is studded with gems. Its modelling is far more realistic than the previous example. It is a charming image that partakes of all the refinements characteristic of the ninth century.

The chief collection of bronzes, however, comes from the Śuchīndram temple and these are taken to date from the twelfth century onwards.¹ The figures of Sabhāpati or Naṭarāja and his consort in the Sabhāpati shrine as well as Śiva and Pārvatī in the shrine of Śuchīndrapuramāḷ are beautiful examples of the Chōḷa tradition. There are a few Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava bronzes in the Trivandrum Museum, which may be dated to the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries; an image of dancing Bālakrishṇa (pl. LXVI B) from the same collection is a fine piece of sculptural art, and is ascribable to the fifteenth century.

In some of the temples of Kerala one finds bronzes placed along with the *dhruva-bhēras* but because of various restrictions it has not been possible to study such images properly. A fine standing image of Subrahmaṇya (pl. XXXI A), reminiscent of the Chōḷa idiom, can be seen in the *garbha-griha* of the Subrahmaṇya temple at Maniyur, District Cannanore. Similarly the bronze figure of seated Viṣṇu below a hooded cobra in the form of Vaikuṇṭha-nātha, from Pullur (below, p. 195), though not as charming as the previous one, is ascribable to the eleventh or twelfth century.

Metal statuary executed in typical Kerala idiom appeared during the fifteenth-sixteenth century. A sixteenth-century bronze, identified as Viṣṇumāyā, now in the Trichur Museum, is typical of the phase. It is marked by heavy modelling, elaborate ornamentation and stylized features. Some of the metal images of this period have been made in hollow-cast process, which is, however, basically 'lost-wax' or *cire perdue* process. There are two *dvāra-pālas*, in the Trichur Museum, displaying hollow interior, and in this method of casting, the image has to be modelled in clay and then coated with wax, to be followed by another layer of clay; at the time of actual casting the wax is drained out by heating. None the less, these two images, ascribable to the seventeenth century, are said to have been made of *pañcha-lōha*, an ideal alloy for statuary in south India as opposed to the *ashṭa-dhātu* of the northern tradition. While *pañcha-lōha* is an alloy of copper, silver, gold, brass and white lead, *ashṭa-dhātu* is an amalgam of eight metals like gold, silver, iron, tin,

¹K. K. Pillay (1953), *op. cit.*, pp. 414-21.

lead, mercury, copper and zinc. To return to the main theme; there is a silver image of Śāstā (pl. LXVII A), in the Trivandrum Museum, whose core is of wood, while strips of beaten silver—secured carefully by silver nails—have been laid over it. A group of metal images, also of the seventeenth or eighteenth century, from the Śiva temple at Thiruvanchikulam, include figures like Naṭarāja, Umāsahita-Śiva, Chēramāṇ Perumāḷ Nāyanār and Sundaramūrti Nāyanār. Of these, the Naṭarāja figure—the inscription on its base calls it Sabhāpati of Thiruvanchikulam—retains all the grace and elegance characteristic of such a composition though the image, in keeping with the tradition of the time, is loaded with jewellery and a conspicuous *prabhā-valī*. A few Jaina bronzes, ascribable to the fourteenth century, comes from Manjeshwara, in Kasaragod Taluk, of District Cannanore.

The metal-works of here are not confined merely to the making of images in the round, for Kerala's artistic talents and sense of beauty found expressions also through other arts or crafts—to make a clear-cut distinction between the two being really difficult. Of various kinds of metal crafts prevalent in Kerala, it is proposed to say a few words in passing about the rafter-shoes and lamps. Rafter-shoes have been employed widely in Kerala to cover and protect the ends of the wooden beams and rafters, visible from outside. It goes to the credit of the Kerala artists to have transformed the commonplace rafter-shoes into magnificent artistic pieces. Excellent reliefs of deities and other decorative motifs are embossed on thin metal sheets. One such rafter-shoe, exhibited in the Trivandrum Museum, is inscribed with an inscription of the fourteenth century. It is made of brass and its central attraction is a standing four-armed relief of Viṣṇu, flanked on either side by Śrī-Dēvī and Bhū-Dēvī. The piece depicts a lotus-medallion and a running scroll design. Deities shown on rafter-shoes include Gajalakshmī, Anantaśayī Viṣṇu, Naṭarāja, Brahmā and so on. Sometimes, the entire length bears carvings narrating some *Purāṇic* episode or the other. For example, the Viṣṇu temple at Parappankod, District Trivandrum, has several rafter-shoes delineating various stories, including a few from the Kṛishṇa legend (pl. LXVII B).

Kerala is famous also for various types of metal lamps used variously for offering, prayer, external illumination and for focussing light in the Kathākali dance. They have exquisite external shapes simulating some animals or birds. The most well-known is the *changalavattū*, also known as Greek lamp, resembling a peacock; the head holds the wick and the oil, while the body serves as the reservoir for storing oil. The brass lamps of Kerala constitute an interesting study of their own, but a detailed discussion is beyond the purview of the present work.

6. MURAL PAINTINGS

Another fine art that received patronage in the hands of the temple-builders was the painting. A comprehensive study of the murals of Kerala has yet to be taken up and it should necessarily be preceded by a detailed mapping of their find-spots. The occurrence of murals has been noticed throughout the present length of Kerala, the northernmost site being the Anantapadmanābha temple at Anantapur Gudda, District Cannanore. In

the course of the present survey no less than sixty temples disclosing traces of murals have come to our notice. There must be many more temples bearing paintings but not known to the present writer. However, in order to make a beginning of such listing, the available facts have been given in the list (Table I) at the end of the present chapter (p. 129). It is hoped that in course of time it will be possible to prepare a still more comprehensive list of sites with murals.

Beginnings of the art of murals in Kerala are shrouded in obscurity. Coloured images, be they in stone or wood, are closely associated with paintings not only in tone, but very often, also in expression. The main support for all this art is the drawing which must have been cultivated in some form or the other from a very early time. Thus, all the basic requirements were available in Kerala for the emergence of painting as a distinct mode of artistic expression. Still it is not known for certain when exactly the paintings in Kerala began as an art of decorating temples and other edifices.

Unlike other parts of India, Kerala did not produce any miniature paintings similar to the Mughal, Rajput or Pahari schools. Nor did the art of painted manuscripts attain any amount of perfection. This is not to say that it is altogether absent here. For example, Sivaramamurti has published, apart from a Gaṇeśa figure, the painting of Śeṣhaśāyī Viṣṇu and the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha, noticed in the fragments of illustrations in the manuscript of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.¹ These are dated to the sixteenth century, and what is worth noting is the absence of over-ornamentation in the figures. Such a stray evidence cannot be compared with the rich tradition of illustrated manuscripts, say for instance, from Gujarat, Nepal or Bengal. Here not even the Maratha paintings of Thanjavur, which flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, gained any ground. In Kerala, the whole emphasis was laid on murals, and they occur on the exterior walls of temples and not in the interior. But this is not the case with the murals in the palaces where they have been executed on the inside walls. The reason for selecting outside walls for temple-murals is not hard to seek: perhaps the advent of murals as decorative elements of temples was preceded by the practice of barring entry inside the sanctum.²

It is generally held that the murals in the Tirunandikara cave, District Kanyakumari, are the earliest vestiges of this art in Kerala. But the cave-exacavation as well as its paintings are decidedly of Pāṇḍya origin. Like the Pallavas of Kanchi, the Pāṇḍyas also patronized the art of paintings, which has mostly been employed in decorating the interior of the cave-temples. It is worth-noting that paintings in the Pallava country are confined mainly to structural temples, and not in the cave-shrines. In this respect, the Pāṇḍyas followed the same tradition as the one noticed in the cave-architecture of the Chālukyas of Badami. Significantly, a few cave-temples, which are located within the present political limits of Kerala, do not disclose any paintings. In the circumstances, the murals of the cave-temple

¹ C. Sivaramamurti, *South Indian Paintings* (New Delhi, 1968), pp. 155 and 161.

² Śrī Laṅkā, during the eighteenth century, saw the appearance of the *Jātaka* paintings, in the narrative style, on the walls of the *vihāras*. There may exist some links between the two groups of murals but it is just a hypothesis.

at Tirunandikara should not be taken to be of Kerala origin; to call it early Chēra is fraught with great many historical problems inasmuch as the Chēras might not have been present there at all during the eighth and the ninth centuries. The face of the Mahāpurusha of Tirunandikara may well be compared with some of the faces of the murals of Sittannavasal, District Pudukkottai, another Pāṇḍya excavation. In the paintings of the last-mentioned cave one finds not only human figures but also portrayal of animal and vegetal motifs like pool with lotuses, fish, ducks and so on. Almost similar portrayal is to be seen in the Tirumalapuram cave, District Tirunelveli, also of Pāṇḍya origin. Animal and floral motifs, though at present in a very fragmentary state, are depicted also in the Tirunandikara cave, thereby suggesting familial relationship between the different groups of Pāṇḍya murals.

The stupendous panel of Naṭarāja (pl. LX) in the *gōpura* of the Mahādēva temple at Ettumanur, District Kottayam, is taken to represent the next landmark in the history of the Kerala school of paintings.¹ It is dated to the sixteenth century on the ground that the repairs to the temple were completed in A.D. 1545, and that the murals in the *gōpura*, it is argued, cannot be later than the period of renovation. But the date of the renovation of the temple cannot necessarily be taken as the date of the murals, which might have been executed much later. In this huge panel, figures have been arranged in four distinct planes, a feature noticed also in the gigantic wall-paintings of the Gajēndramōksha scene of the Krishnapuram palace, dated to the eighteenth century. To the present writer, the Natarāja panel of Ettumanur may not be far removed in point of time from the murals of the Krishnapuram palace, as they share several common traits.

It will be evident from the Table I (p. 129) that the Kerala school of paintings, some illustrations of which are given on plates XXXIV B, LII-LIV A, LX, and LXII A, flourished throughout the present geographical limit of the state for at least two hundred years, an estimate based firmly on the epigraphical data. In the Pallimanna Śiva temple at Kumblanad, are to be seen two painted verses supplying the date A.D. 1691, whereas the murals in the Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa shrine of the Vaḍakkunātha temple-complex at Trichur were repaired, according to the painted epigraph there, in A.D. 1731, by one Kaṇṇaṇ, the Nāyar disciple of Nambūdiri Netra.² Furthermore, a painted inscription in the Pāṇḍava-Śāstā temple at Aimanam, near Kottayam, states that the wall-paintings were executed by Nārāyaṇapaṭṭar, a resident of Rāmavarmapuram-aharam, in Tiruvandapuram-dēśam and the disciple of Kaykkotta Namputiri in Kollam 1019 (A.D. 1844).³ In the face of these

¹ Kramrisch, Cousens and Poduval (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 174. Also see C. Sivaramamurti (1968), *op. cit.*, p. 150. He writes, 'In the neighbourhood of Travancore the paintings in the temple at Ettumanur should be reckoned the earliest after those of Tirunandikara and go back to the 16th century. Coomaraswamy held the painting of Naṭarāja in the *gōpura* of this temple as a very important old example of "Dravidian painting." It is also interesting for its tremendous size (12' x 8'). An inscription in the temple, referring to the repairs and purification ceremony in about 1445 A.D. indicates that these paintings should be of about that time.' The date given in the quotation is obviously a printing mistake and should be read 1545. See *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VII, p. 139.

² V. R. Chitra and T. N. Srinivasan, *Cochin Murals* (text and two volumes of plates) (Cochin, 1940), p. 94.

³ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1970-71*, no. 70.

evidences, the main period of the Kerala school of paintings may be fixed from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the nineteenth centuries. Of course, there are temples with twentieth century murals as well but they are outside the scope of the present study.

There is yet another reason for dating the beginning of such murals in the middle of the seventeenth century. In the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries, the revival of the *Bhakti* movement, led by literary giants like Tuñchat Eḷuttachāṇ (mid-sixteenth) Melapattur Nārāyaṇaṇ Bhaṭṭatiri (1560-1646) and Puntanam Nambūdiri (1547-1640) created an atmosphere through their devotional literature for the rise of various temple-arts. Themes for various compositions were adopted from the *Purāṇas*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Kerala experienced the growth of Kathākali literature in this very phase. Influences of this *Bhakti* movement are markedly manifest both on the murals and wood-carvings of various temples. It was this very factor which accounted for a non-sectarian approach to the selection of various themes. That a few temples sprang to great prominence because of the attention they received from the exponents of the *Bhakti* cult is a well-known fact. At least this was the case with the Kṛishṇa temple at Guruvayur, whose great devotee was Puntanam Nambūdiri. It is thus no exaggeration to say that this was a period of great cultural reawakening that came close on the heel of economic stability and prosperity. Viewed against this historical perspective, the advent and popularity of wall-paintings during the seventeenth to the nineteenth century appear to be more logical than postulating an earlier date.

The spatial distribution of the wall-paintings throughout Kerala is also a significant pointer. Despite differences there exists a basic unity in this vast repertoire of murals not only in form and colour but also in minor motifs. To cite an instance: the Naṭarāja figure at Ettumanur is enclosed within a circular rim, a motif noticed at Aimanam (pl. LXII A), near Kottayam, as well as at Edacheri Amsam, in District Kozhikode. Yet for the study of variations in styles, the murals of the Mattancheri palace, Cochin, offer the best scope available so far. Before coming to that aspect of the study, it is necessary to say a few words about the methods and techniques followed in the mural paintings of Kerala.

There persists a great deal of uniformity in the technique of executing murals throughout south India, specially during the period under review. In Kerala, as the walls are made of laterite their rough surfaces, marked by cavities, serve as the carrier or teeth for the murals. Invariably the ground is prepared out of lime-plaster in which silica constitutes the inert material. The thickness varies from example to example: in the cases of the Vaḍakkunnātha, first floor of the Mattancheri palace, Ettumanur and the Padmanābhapuram palace, the plaster is thick while it is thin in the murals of the ground floor of the Mattancheri palace and Peruvanam. Inequalities of the surface of the wall or carrier largely contribute to varying thickness of rough plaster in the preparation of the ground. Then, the rough plaster on the walls of the ground-floor of Mattancheri palace is composed of pure lime—silica therein occurring only as an impurity. Again the painted stucco under microscopic examination discloses three distinct layers: the pigments, fine layer of lime plaster

and coarse lime-plaster. The pigments used have been identified as yellow ochre, red ochre, *terra-verde*, carbon and lime.

Paramasivam is of the opinion that 'the technique employed in preparing the ground is one of fresco because of the absence of drying oil, glue, albumin or casein in the plaster. His experiments also show that 'the lime and not any organic substances had been used to serve as binding medium.'¹ But the murals of Kerala are certainly not *fresco buono* or true fresco as confirmed by the absence of brush-marks and lack of interfusing of pigments with stucco surface. According to him, the paintings have been executed in 'lime medium' and gum was used only for mixing the black pigment. Perhaps Paramasivam is inclined to classify the paintings from the former States of Travancore and Cochin under the category of *fresco secco*. At any cost, he does not consider these murals as tempera paintings in which colours are used with a binding medium like gum, glue, casein and so on, soluble in water.

On the other hand, Parekh,² while describing the technique of the Mattancheri murals is inclined to take these paintings, rather implicitly, as tempera. Unfortunately his conclusions are not supported by any chemical test or scientific investigation. But the particulars about colours and binding medium that he obtained from a local artist, who had received training from an old traditional painter, are worth considering. He writes that 'These colours were ground fine and for long with water from tender cocoanuts and a binding material made of a kind of red seeds with a black eye mark on it (*abrus precatorium*). The binding material is made by first removing the egg-like shell of the seeds and keeping the inside yellow matter looking like small peas in water for over a night and then grinding it into soft paste. If this paste dries, it becomes useless; so it is prepared fresh every day. This binding material is generally used by goldsmiths.' It is not known for certain if the binding medium here like vegetable glue or gum perished like the murals of Ajanta in the course of centuries, partly on account of autoxidation and partly due to the depredations by insect-pest.³ None the less, the primary desideratum of the problem is a thorough re-investigation into the technique followed in the murals of Kerala.

The process of painting is also an interesting study: there are instances where the painted stucco has given way, and there are also cases where the painted film or the pigment has alone suffered decay. Some examples of unfinished paintings are also available, the most notable of them being the panels from Kālidāsa's *Kumāra-sambhava* in the ground floor of the Mattancheri palace. The artists here have drawn their first sketch with a very light yellow colour. Similar outlines have been observed on the walls of a subshrine of the ruined Subrahmaṇya temple at Tenari, District Palghat, and the old Subrahmaṇya temple

¹ S. Paramasivam, 'An investigation into the methods of the mural paintings', *Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art*, VII (Calcutta, 1939), pp. 19-38. For the criticism of the method used by Paramasivam in his chemical analysis, see R. H. De Silva, 'The evolution of the technique of Sinhalese wall-paintings and comparison with Indian painting methods', in *Ancient Ceylon*, no. 1 (1971), pp. 98-102.

² Jayantilal T. Parekh, 'The technique of mural paintings', in Chitra and Srinivasan (1940), *op. cit.*, pp. 112-118.

³ B. B. Lal, 'The murals: their composition and technique' in *Ajanta Murals* (New Delhi, 1967), ed. A. Ghosh, pp. 53-55.

at Kidangur, District Kottayam. It appears that the artist was free to change the lines of the drawing on the well-prepared ground which apparently might have a dry one. 'After this he draws over this his final drawing with red colour. The spaces of this final drawing are filled with colours. When the distribution of flat colours is over the forms are shaded with a fine brush, by stippling process, the marks of which are quite visible to show the roundness of the forms. Yellow colour is shaded with red and green colour with black. When the work is finished all the forms are lined with black colour and so the original red line disappears.'¹

Now about the variations in style in the wall-paintings of the Mattancheri palace. As is well-known, the murals of the Mattancheri palace are mainly distributed in three halls known as Palliyara or Royal Bed-chamber, Kovini-thalam and the Ladies' Chamber. These three groups of wall-paintings are generally ascribed to the latter half of the sixteenth, eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries respectively. Undoubtedly the three sets have several distinguishing features but it has to be affirmed if these are really due to chronological factors. The dating of the first phase is based on the slender evidence that the palace was built by the Portuguese in A.D. 1557. But it has to be remembered that the palace was thoroughly renovated by the Dutch some time in the second half of the seventeenth century. Hence there is a greater likelihood of the first set of the murals coming into existence in the seventeenth century when the building took its final shape. So far as the style is concerned, these paintings have all the essential features of the local tradition, marked by exuberance of jewellery and other ornamental details. It is doubtful if this tendency developed fully in the sixteenth century, as the paintings of Śeṣhaśāyī Viṣṇu with Madhu and Kaiṭabha in an illustration of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, do not portray figures overloaded with ornaments.

In the wall-paintings of the Royal Bed-chamber every inch of the space is painted in sombre colours: blue is absent while the white has been used sparingly. The white is produced by keeping the original ground unpainted or by subsequent scraping off of the colour apparently on a completely dry surface; to the present writer, the former technique appears to have been used commonly. Whatever that may be, most of the panels here contain more than one scene arranged vaguely in horizontal planes and depict in continuous sequence the *Rāmāyaṇa* story beginning from the *putrakāmēśṭi-yāga* ('sacrifice wishing birth of child') to Sītā's return from captivity. There is an attempt to distinguish each figure, specially its upper part, by a beaded border in bluish green.

The murals of the Kovinithalam lack completely the story-element because the panels here are devoted to the portrayal of some divinity or the other like Mahālakṣmī and Bhūtamālā, Anantaśāyī Viṣṇu, Kūḍalmānikkasvāmī (the image of Viṣṇu in the Irinja-lakuda temple), Umāmahēśvara, Kirātamūrti, Rāma's coronation and so on. Most of them are painted in the same fashion as that of the Royal Bed-chamber, although the element of white is more in them. Nevertheless, somewhat different idiom has been followed in the delineation of the panels relating to Rāma's coronation, Kirātamūrti and the 'unfinished' Viṣṇu image. The use of white and lighter shades of green, brown and other colours is common in them, thereby producing greater tonal effect. On the whole, one can

¹ Parekh (1940), *op. cit.* p., 117.

distinguish four noticeable changes in the second group of murals of the Kovinithalam compared to those of the Bed-chamber: the absence of continuous narration; the use of lighter shades; introduction of dance-poses; and the tendency to eliminate the beaded borders enclosing the different figures. Some of these aspects have their full play in the wall-paintings of the Ladies' Chamber in the ground floor.

There are two halls with murals in the ground floor of the Mattancheri palace: the one known as Ladies' Chamber has paintings in lighter colours, while its adjacent room contains panel only in outline, narrating the story of the *Kumāra-sambhava*. In the murals of the Ladies' Chamber, scenes are not congested; and moreover, the idea of space has been introduced by way of incorporating landscapes in the scheme. Shading producing tonal effects and of realistic colours have been employed in delineating minutely even the minor features like nails, fingers, folds of clothes and so on. Figures, some of them in profile, are comparatively slim with attenuated waist, and also free from any bounding line. Even the forms of human and animal figures are naturalistic and they are so well-shaded as to completely hide the stippling-marks. All the panels here like Śiva dallying with Mōhini, Umā-Mahēśvara, Kṛishṇa and Gōpīs, Kṛishṇa as Gōvardhanagiri-dhārī and others breathe an air of freshness and freedom, though marked by an undercurrent of sensuousness in spite of the fact that the themes are religious and mythological in import. It is noteworthy that the modelling of the figures recalls that of Vaikam and Ettumanur. All these changes seem to have been effected by the influence of naturalism of the European tradition.

Thus, broadly speaking, the wall-paintings of the Mattancheri palace show two main trends: those in the Royal Bed-chamber follow the traditional line and those in the Ladies' Chamber exhibit features adapted from the European style. Perhaps two different schools of artists participated in painting the murals of the palace and it appears to be a reasonable proposition considering the fact that the murals in a residential building may not have been done in stages. That these developments have no temporal bearing is evident from the murals of the Pāṇḍava Śāstā temple at Aimanam, near Kottayam, dated to the nineteenth century where the traditional style had been fully employed although it is apparent that the paintings lack instinctive appeal and structural quality.

The co-existence of more than one style may be seen also in the murals of the Pallimanna Śiva temple at Kumbalanad, District Trichur. Most of the murals here are divided into panels (pls. LIII B and LIV A) portraying some deity or a mythological scene. There are two main narratives on the western wall—the top one devoted to Śiva-Pārvatī's marriage and the bottom one depicting the scene of the Kirātārjuniya. The panel on the north-east corner, with an inscription, appears to be the outcome of another trend having affinities with the school responsible for the murals of the Ladies' Chamber of the Mattancheri Palace. Of the Thiruvanchikulam examples, Veṇugōpāla, Rāma and his brothers, besides other representations, bear influence of the same trend. On the contrary, wall-paintings delineating vividly the story of the *Mahābhārata*, in the Śaṅkara-nārāyaṇa temple, where panelling has not been followed, as well as the murals, without any narrative element, of the Rāma temple at Triprayar are inspired by the traditional school.

Panellings in paintings are no doubt copies of the similar arrangement in the wood-carvings, but they are to be noticed also in the Vijayanagara and the Nāyaka paintings. It is, however, difficult to trace the influence of the Vijayanagara tradition on the murals of Kerala, which is marked by grater assuredness and dynamism. Undeniably, the pictorial art of Kerala, conditioned more by the wood-carver's art has its own form and expression. Its distant relationship with the Hoysala art is only in respect of the over-ornamentation of figures and motifs. In spirit as well as in content, in form and expression, the Kerala murals are miles apart from the Hoysala style, preserved only in the illustrated Jaina manuscripts from Mudbidri, South Kanara. The Anantapadmanābha temple at Anantapur Gudda, near Kumbala, is practically in Tuḷunāḍu yet its murals (pl. XXXIV A) are akin to the Kerala tradition than to the Hoysala style, which is known to us only through the illustrations in manuscripts. In the Anantapadmanābha temple, paintings are devoted to the representation of floral motifs and running floral designs alongside the usual ones, portrayed in rectangular panels. Here also the European style is in evidence at least in some of the extant panels.

It is worth-noting that definite records and paintings regarding the existence of a minor style under the patronage of the East India Company are available in the India Office Library, London.¹ These are drawn in European style, and those too, by the Malabar artists in the early years of the nineteenth century. Executed in a restrained palette, of brown, fawn, white, green and yellow, these are living examples of how the Malabar artists adjusted themselves to new situation and needs. And this very trend must have infiltrated into the traditional style bringing about changes in its form and technique. The process must have set in with Malabar's contact with the European culture.

TABLE I
Temples and Palaces with Murals

Serial No. (1)	Locality (2)	Latitude (3)	Longitude (4)	Name of monument (5)
<i>District Alleppey</i>				
1.	Aranmula	9°15'N	76°40'E	Vishṇu temple
2.	Ariyad North	9°30'N	76°20'E	Manacherry Śiva temple
3.	Kayankulam	9°10'N	76°30'E	Krishṇapuram palace
4.	Mannar	9°20'N	76°30'E	Panayannarkavu
<i>District Cannanore</i>				
5.	Anantapur Gudda	12°34'N	74°59'E	Anantapadmanābhasvāmī temple
6.	Kannirangad	12°04'N	75°23'E	Vaidyanāthasvāmī temple
7.	Pullur	12°20'N	75°21'E	Śrī Kōḍavalam Viṣṇu temple
8.	Tricchambaram	12°01'N	75°21'E	Krishṇa temple

¹ Mildred and W. G. Archer, *Indian Paintings For the British, 1770-1880* (Oxford, 1955), figs. 42-43, Also see, Mildred Archer, *Company Drawings in the India Office Library* (London, 1972).

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF TEMPLES OF KERALA

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>District Ernakulam</i>				
9.	Cheranallur, Cochin	10°05'N	76°25'E	Śrī Durgā temple
10.	Cochin	9°55'N	76°15'E	Mattancheri palace
11.	Elangannupuzha (Vypin Island)	9°55'N	76°10'E	Old Subrahmaṇya temple
12.	Pazhur	9°50'N	76°25'E	Peruntirukovil
<i>District Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu)</i>				
13.	Padmanabhapuram	8°10'N	77°15'E	Shrine within the Padma-nābhapuram palace
14.	Padmanabhapuram	8°10'N	77°15'E	Padmanabhapuram palace
15.	Tiruvattar	8°15'N	77°15'E	Śrī Ādikēśavaperumāḷ temple
<i>District Kottayam</i>				
16.	Aimanam	9°35'N	76°25'E	Pāṇḍava Śāstā temple
17.	Aimanam	9°35'N	76°25'E	Śrī Narasiṃha temple
18.	Ettumanur	9°40'N	76°30'E	Old Mahādēva temple
19.	Kidangur	9°35'N	76°35'E	Old Subrahmaṇya temple
20.	Kottayam	9°35'N	76°30'E	Thaliyil Śiva temple
21.	Kumaranallur	9°37'N	76°31'E	Bhagavatī temple
22.	Tirkodittanam	9°25'N	76°33'E	Kṛishṇa temple
23.	Tirunakkara	9°35'N	76°31'E	Tirunakkara Śiva temple
24.	Udayanapuram	9°45'N	76°23'E	Subrahmaṇya temple
25.	Vaikam	9°44'N	76°23'E	Śiva temple
26.	Vasudevapuram	9°35'N	76°30'E	Śrī Kṛishṇasvāmī temple
<i>District Kozhikode</i>				
27.	Kozhikode	11°10'N	75°45'E	Tali temple
28.	Edachcheri Amsam	11°40'N	75°35'E	Kaliyamballi ambalam
29.	Tiruvannur	11°12'N	75°49'E	Śiva temple
<i>District Malappuram</i>				
30.	Alayakkad	10°55'N	76°10'E	Śrī Narasiṃha temple
31.	Angadippuram	10°58'N	76°12'E	Bhagavatī temple
32.	Kodakkal	10°50'N	75°55'E	Hanumānkāvu
33.	Kollangod	10°35'N	76°40'E	Kachankurushi (Vishṇu) temple
34.	Manjeri	11°07'N	76°07'E	Karikkaḍ kshetram
35.	Tanur	10°55'N	75°50'E	Trikkayikkat temple
36.	Tavanur	10°51'N	75°59'E	Śrī Kṛishṇa temple
37.	Triprangod	10°50'N	75°55'E	Minor shrine in the Śiva temple

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>District Palghat</i>				
38.	Lakkidiperur II	10°45'N	76°25'E	Killikurichi Śiva temple
39.	Palliyurkavu	10°35'E	76°25'E	Śiva temple
40.	Tenari	10°40'N	76°45'E	Bhagavatī shrine in Subrah- maṇya temple-complex
41.	Trikkangod	10°45'N	76°21'E	Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa temple
42.	Tirumittakkod	10°46'N	76°11'E	Śiva shrine
43.	Tirumittakkod	10°46'N	76°11'E	Vishṇu temple
44.	Tiruvegappura	10°52'N	76°08'E	Tiruvegappura temple
45.	Trikkadiri I	10°51'N	76°20'E	Trikkadiri Moonru Murti temple
<i>District Quilon</i>				
46.	Koduman	9°10'N	76°45'E	Vaikunṭhapuram Viṣṇu temple
<i>District Trichur</i>				
47.	Chemmanthatta	10°35'N	76°05'E	Śiva temple
48.	Guruvayur	10°35'N	76°00'E	Kṛishṇa temple
49.	Kumblanad	10°41'N	76°14'E	Pallimannar Śiva temple
50.	Panjal	10°40'N	76°15'E	Śrī Ayyappaṇ Kāvu
51.	Peramangalam	10°30'N	76°05'E	Mundur Śiva temple
52.	Perumannam	10°26'N	76°12'E	Śiva temple
53.	Puzhakkal	10°30'N	76°10'E	Śiva temple
54.	Thiruvanchikulam	10°12'N	76°12'E	Śiva temple
55.	Trichur	10°30'N	76°10'E	Vaḍakkunnāṭha temple
56.	Triprayar	10°24'N	76°06'E	Śrī Rāma temple
<i>District Trivandrum</i>				
57.	Attingal	8°40'N	76°45'E	Bhagavatī temple
58.	Kadinamkulam	8°35'N	76°49'E	Mahādēva temple
59.	Trichakrapuram			
60.	Trivandrum	8°25'N	76°55'E	Fort Palace (Karivelapura Malikai)
61.	Trivandrum	8°25'N	76°55'E	Śrī Padmanābhasvāmī temple
62.	Vanchiyoor	8°29'N	76°56'E	Padmanābhasvāmī temple

CHAPTER V

EARLY PHASE

1. INTRODUCTION

That Kerala, too, had an architectural and sculptural phase more or less coeval with that of Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam or Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam is quite certain. It seems that geographical isolation of Kerala is more a myth than a fact, for culturally, the entire far south shared common artistic and religious trends, though modified, to some extent, by various local factors and interaction of events. Vastness of area and hostile terrain, as is well-known, did not deter the Āḷvārs and Nāyanmārs to traverse the lands between the two seas. It is then quite natural that ripples of any torrent that stirred this vast cultural expanse would drift to other corners sooner or later. Such a mechanism is inherent in any contemporary movement, and this is true more for the extreme south because there was no linguistic barrier at that time between the present-day Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The only definite contrasting element is the climate, the high precipitation on the west coast, resulting into the growth of lush vegetation and timber-yielding forest. It was again the heavy rainfall that conditioned the external and internal forms of Kerala's temple-architecture, which is basically, as emphasized more than once in these pages, an adaptation of the south Indian tradition to local needs and exigencies. Yet it must be considered as a distinctive style having its own area of concentration and distribution.

Remains of temple-architecture ascribable to the Early phase (800-1000) are rather stray and often indeterminable. Association of datable sculptures and epigraphical material may offer some clues regarding the antiquity of a structure that had long lost its pristine character. Still, it can be said with certainty that ground-plans here remain very much unaffected, more so, where the *adhishṭhānas*, sometimes even bearing inscriptions ascribable to the Middle phase, are built of granite. Consequently, the study of the ground-plan has to be given more attention: indeed, variety in ground-plans speaks of Kerala's architectural wealth which is fast vanishing due to senseless repairs and restorations. Other basic characteristics of the early temples have been summarized before, and in the following pages it is proposed to describe some of the extant remains with emphasis on more notable features. These examples have first been classified according to their probable dynastic association because all the three major ruling families—the Āys, the Chēras and the Mūshikas—had undertaken the sacred task of building temples (above p. 97). Thereafter each group has further been divided according to the ground-plan, irrespective of their being a *sāndhāra* or *nirandhāra* temple.

It is necessary to sound caution even at the risk of reiteration: there is hardly any early specimen preserved from *adhishthāna* to *stūpī*; moreover, subsequent additions to plan and structural elevation have often to be taken out of consideration to visualize the original layout and the structural form. Walls up to *kapīta* are generally well-preserved, and conversely, the portion above the cornice has virtually to be eliminated from the study of early temple-architecture. Then, for arriving at the date, proper care has been taken to study not only the architectural style but also sculpture and inscriptions. Sometimes, the antiquity of the site is indicated only by a stray image in an otherwise modernized building like, for example, the Bhagavatī temple at Kodungalur (pl. XIX A), a place haloed by many a sacred tradition.

Even in the early phase, temples have been built both in pure Drāviḍa as well as in Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa styles—the co-existence of both the styles being more pronounced in the Āy territory in south Kerala. On the other hand, in Chēra and Mūshika countries, extant remains of purely Drāviḍa architecture, ascribable to the Early phase, are absent. However, for the sake of completeness, temples of both the styles have been described under the relevant groups. It is proposed to start our survey with the Āys who occupied the southernmost part of Kerala.

2. TEMPLES IN ĀY COUNTRY

A. INTRODUCTION

As the ninth century proved to be the golden age for south Indian temple-architecture, it is no wonder that the Āys, like several other minor dynasties of the south,¹ would participate in such activities. Vaishṇavism appears to have received great fillip under the Āys, notwithstanding the policy of religious tolerance that they pursued. Compared to other parts of the state, south Kerala shows a preponderance of Vaishṇava shrines, and it is no accident that the majority of the *divya-dēśams* are located here. Of such sites, half-a-dozen are situated around Tiruchcheṅgaṇṇūr, about 49·89 km from Kottarakara, in District Quilon.² As the political boundary of the Āy kingdom is not known for certain, it is hard to say how many of the *divya-dēśams* fall definitely within the area. Unquestionably, two shrines—Śrī Padmanābhasvāmi temple at Tiruvanandapuram or Trivandrum, and Tiruvattar, near Negercoil—were located in the heartland of the Āy country, both the temple-deities being sung by Nammāḷvār. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the architecture of the temples at the time of the visit by this great Vaishṇava saint. The possibility is that the temples during his time might have been built of durable material; hence,

¹ Some of the minor dynasties that took part in the temple-building are the Muttarayars, Irukkuvels, Bāṇas, Nōḷambas, Telugu Chōḍas, Vaidumbas and so on.

² Tiruchcheṅgaṇṇūr has been sung by Nammāḷvār. From this place Tiruvāranvīlai is 9·66 km to the east; Tiruppuliyūr is about 6·44 km to the west; Tiruvamunḍūr is about 8·04 km north-west; Tiruvallavāḷ is 16·10 km to the north; and Tirkodittanam about 6·44 km further north-east. For the list of *divya-dēśams*, see K. V. Krishna Ayyar, *A History of Kerala* (Ernakulam, 1966), pp. 196-97.

may not be fundamentally different, at least so far as the ground-plan is concerned, from what we see of them at present.

It is noteworthy that the temples in the Āy country were built on three types of ground-plan: square Drāviḍa as well as Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa shrines, circular Kerala style of temples, and temples built on rectangular plan. Apparently, no apsidal shrine was raised during the Āy supremacy over south Kerala. Temples in Drāviḍa style can be seen at places like Viliṅjam, the capital of the later Āys, Munjira, Parthivapuram and Valiasalai, the last mentioned place generally identified with Kāndaḷur-śālai of the inscriptions. Before we come to the description of the individual temples a word must be said about this famous śālai, which was taken as the prototype of several other institutions of this kind. Without any doubt it is an institution, and not merely a temple—a stronghold rather than a simple place of worship. The fact that successive attacks by Rājārāja I and Rājendra I were directed towards it clearly reveals the military importance of such a temple-institution.

That Kāndaḷur-śālai was very much in existence during the latter half of the eighth century may be confirmed by some indirect reference in Uddyotana-sūri's (728-778) *Kuvalayamālā*. Here the hero Kuvalayachandra visits a *maḍham* in a city called Vijayāpura¹ on the west coast, and finds the students from different countries practising archery, duels and fighting with various weapons. Some more are engaged in painting, music, dance and drama; yet another group is absorbed in discourses of various *śāstras* like *Mīmāṃsā*, *Vyākaraṇa*, *Naiyāyikā-darśana* and so on. Various other subjects on arts and sciences, besides the recitals of Vēdas, are shown to have been cultivated. The *Chaṭṭāṇam-maḍham* of the *Kuvalayamālā*, has rightly been identified with the Kāndaḷur-śālai, which is perhaps the earliest of such institutions on the west coast. It is this śālai which served as the model for the one at Parthivapuram; there was another śālai called Śrīvallavapperuñchālai or Rājārājapperuñchālai at Kaḷikkuḍi, forming part of Kanyakumari;² thus the Āy territory had at least three śālais.

It has already been stated that Kāndaḷur-śālai is generally taken to be Valiasalai, a suburb of Trivandrum. There are some scholars who identify Kāndaḷur with a village of the same name in Neyyatinkara Taluk, District Trivandrum. But the evidence weighs heavily towards its identification with Valiasalai because *Anantapuravarṇanam*, a Malayalam work of the fourteenth century, refers to the presence of a centre of advanced Vēdic studies at Kāndaḷur, shown as forming part of Trivandrum.³ A manuscript of recent date in the Munchirai-maḍam describes the Mahādēva temple at Valiasalai as Kāndaḷur-śālai-mahādēvar.⁴

It is thus evident that Kāndaḷur-śālai, as a temple, attached with a Vēdic school and a military training centre, came up by about the middle of the eighth century. But no

¹ A name invented by the author of the *Kuvalayamālā*, and not a real city. For details, see K. G. Krishnan, 'Caṭṭāṇam Maḍham—its identification', *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, Baroda, XIX (1970), pp. 346-50.

² *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pt. 8, pp. 162-69. The inscription, belonging to the time of Rājādhirāja I, is engraved on the northern side of the *adhishṭhāna* of the Guhanāthasvāmin temple, Kanyakumari.

³ *South Indian Temple Inscriptions*, III, pt. II, p. 9.

⁴ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 2-6.

archaeological remains dating back to that period is forthcoming from the temple-site, which is indeed a very big complex encompassing a number of subsidiary shrine dedicated variously to Bhagavatī, Kṛishṇa, Śāstā and so on. Of them, the Bhagavatī and Kṛishṇa temples, both square on plan, are built in characteristic Drāviḍa style. The former, with a *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna*, has a brick-built square *grīvā* and *śikhara*. On the other hand, the Kṛishṇa shrine, facing west, has an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*. Situated on the north-eastern side, its *adhishṭhāna* is made of granite, whereas the walls relieved by tetragonal pilasters, carrying bevelled corbels, are made of laterite blocks. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal-*kumūda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampās* and *paṭṭikā*. It has a *vēdikā* divided into three segments by *gala-pādas*, while the bases of *kuḍya-stambhas* descend down to the *kaṇṭha*. The *kapōta* has *kuḍus*, but *valabhī* displays dentils instead of *bhūtas* or *hamsas*. On the whole, the general style is reminiscent of temples of the eleventh or twelfth century. It is noteworthy that an inscription of Rājēndra I, written in Grantha and Tamiḷ, has also been discovered from the site.¹ The main shrines dedicated to the trinity—Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā—are in Kerala style. Yet the most significant point that may help in bringing down the date further is the use of *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna* for the Bhagavatī shrine here, a practice noticed not only at Viliṅjam but also in some sites in Tuḷunāḍu. It is, at the same time, a very tenuous thread and not much importance need be given on this unless some corroborative evidence from the site comes to view in the near future. Thus the Drāviḍa shrine, in the present shape, cannot be ascribed to the Early phase.

B. SQUARE DRĀVIḌA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

Strictly speaking, there is no intact square Drāviḍa shrine that may be dated to the Early phase. Of course, there are temples whose foundations definitely go back to that period, and this can be proved not only on the basis of sculptural or epigraphical vestiges but also on grounds of surviving architectural features. It is now proposed to describe below a few such examples. Of such examples, the most important, from the historical point of view, is the Pārthasārathi temple at Pārthivaśēkharapuram (now known as Parthivapuram), reference to which has been made earlier.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Parthivasekharapuram: Pārthasārathi temple

(Figs. 8 and 18)

The Pārthasārathi temple, as it is now called, was raised by the Āy king Karunanda-ḍakkaṇ in the Kali day 1449087 corresponding to June 22 of A.D. 857 (above, p. 18). Built in

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, p. 149. It contains the first part of the historical introduction of Rājēndra I.

his ninth regnal year it was intended to be the loftiest and the finest architectural composition of the Āys. The place where the new structure was to come up was given the name Pārthivaśēkharapuram, which is now located in Vilavankod Taluk, District Kanyakumari.

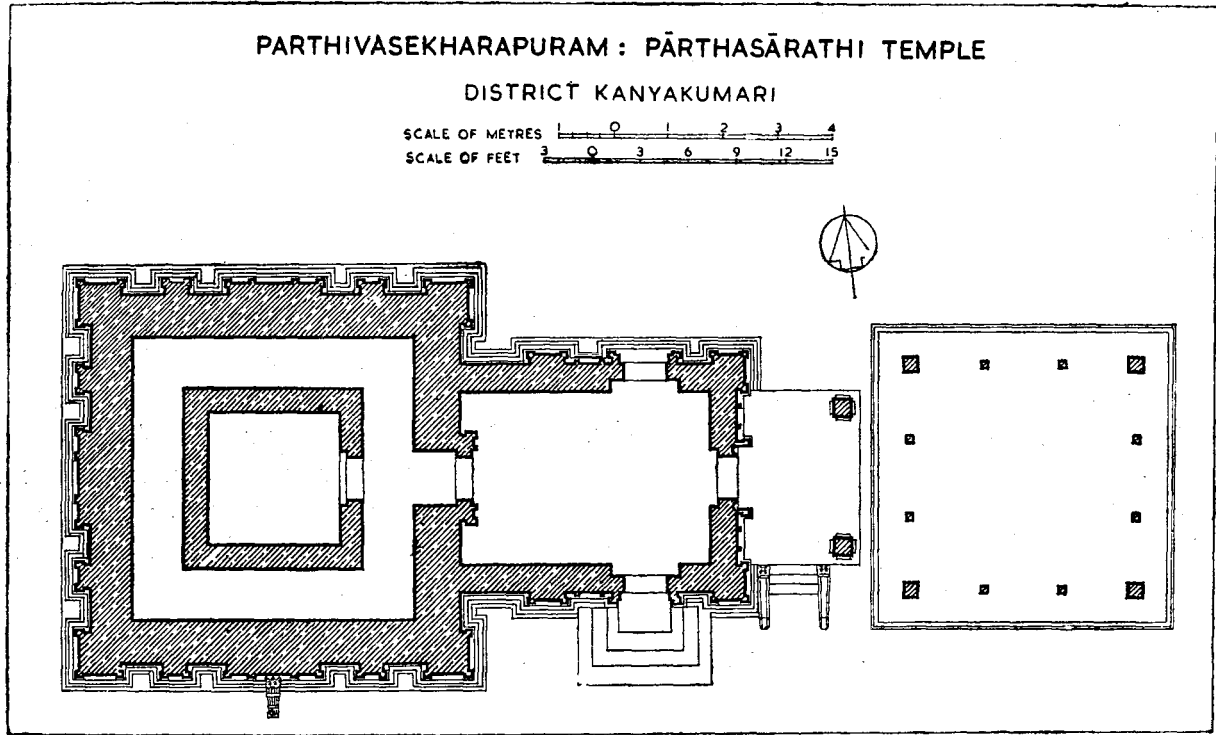


FIG. 18

As stated earlier, it had a *śālai* attached to it, with boarding arrangement for ninety-five *chaṭṭar*. After recording different provisions for the worship of the deity, the Huzur Office inscription (above, p. 18) specifies the rules and regulations of the *śālai* for their strict observance by the students. A knowledge of *Vyākaraṇa*, *Mīmāṃsa* and *Paurohitya* was considered imperative for an applicant; in fact, five *chaṭṭars* were to attest each application to that effect. Furthermore, those who wanted to take admission into the *śālai* should have the necessary knowledge to conduct the affairs of the 'three kingdoms'. The mode of recitation of the Vēdas has also been specified in the copper plates which also contain other stipulation like fine for using abusive language, fasting as punishment for fighting with weapons within the temple-premises, and so on. In fine, the Āy king wanted to make it another Kāndaḷur *śālai*, though it failed to surpass the glory and importance of the latter establishment; it is also evident from the fact that not a single Chōḷa expedition was directed at it. However, it is clear that the royal builder made all efforts to build a magnificent edifice, worthy of his fame and achievement.

As a temple, it must have enjoyed considerable importance, since a Chōḷa inscription from the site refers to the setting up of a silver image in the temple, while a record dated

in Kollam 98 registers a gift of land by one Kumāraṇ Nārāyaṇaṇ for the purpose of burning of two perpetual lamps.¹ The latest known inscription is assignable to the fifteenth century and it is silent about any renovation that the temple might have undergone then or in the past. Perhaps the temple passed through its major phase of reconstruction in the next century.

The temple, as it stands now, is an example of *tritāla-vimāna*, built on a square plan from *adhishṭhāna* to *śikhara*.

Above the *prastara*, it is built of brick and devoid of any architectural importance, except the fact that an attempt may have been made to imitate the original form. All the *talas*, made of brick, have the *hāra* in the form of *kūṭas*, *pañjaras* and *śālās*. The second *tala* has deities at four cardinal directions: Narasiṃha on the west, Brahmā on the north, Indra on the east and Dakṣiṇāmūrti on the south. These images are perhaps of stucco. Each side of the square *śikhara* shows a *nāsikā* flanked on either side by a minor one. The *stūpī* crowning the edifice is of metal.

The *adhishṭhāna* is of granite and the mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* and *paṭṭikā*. Even the *vēdikā*, with *pādas*, is of granite; it appears to be the duplication of the very *kaṇṭha* with *kampas*. The *praṇāla* in the form of a fluted shaft, with curved end, emanates from the *siṃha-mukha*, projecting out of the *kaṇṭha*. It is decidedly a later insertion inasmuch as its curved end terminates into lotus-bud. Its actual outlet is cut along the fluted surface for letting out the *abhishēka* water. Under no circumstances, it can be considered contemporaneous with the granite *adhishṭhāna*. Below the *praṇāla* is a seated *bhūta* figure.

Four alternating recesses divide the *adhishṭhāna* and the *bhitti* into five bays. Walls are made of laterite blocks, now heavily plastered with lime; these appear to be later constructions, as the presence of *pushpa-pōtikās* indicates. Curiously enough, the *kapōta*, and *siṃha-mālā* above it, are again the of granite. Decorations on the wall comprise tetragonal *kudya-stambhas* and a central niche with *makara-tōraṇa*; in conformity with the normal pattern the niches are non-functional.

The axial division of the temple, facing the west, consists of a square *garbha-griha*, having a *pradakṣiṇā-patha* all round, a projecting *mukha-maṇḍapa* and an attached portico, the last-mentioned unit being associated with a flight of steps on either side. As usual, the *sōpānas* are flanked by *hasti-hasta* banisters. In front of the portico stands a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, with granite base and tiled pyramidal roof. In all probability, the original layout of this Drāviḍa-*vimāna* comprised a square *garbha-griha* with an ambulatory and a *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the latter unit, like the Kīlataḷi Śiva temple, near Cranganur, has three entrances on the three sides. All the entrances have been rendered unnecessary by the addition of the portico, showing an ornate *adhishṭhāna*. Similarly, the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* appears to be incompatible with the main architectural scheme; evidently, it is also a later addition. All these additions and alternations seem to have been carried out in the sixteenth century as reflected by various stylistic features.

¹ Travancore Archaeological Series, I, pt. XVI, pp. 287 and 295.

The Pārthivaśēkharapuram temple is a *sāndhāra vimāna* of the classical type since the *garbha-griha* does not constitute an independent shrine. For a Kerala temple, it is an old character; likewise, the occurrence of three entrances to the *mukha-maṇḍapa* also lends support to our considering the layout as more or less undisturbed. There are sculptures in some of the subsidiary shrines but they could not be photographed or examined in detail because of their position inside the sanctum. But one or two of these may be coeval with the beginning of the complex.

In all, there are six subsidiary shrines dedicated variously to Viṣṇu, Śiva, Bhagavatī and Śāstā. Of these, the one meant for Śāstā, is open to the sky, and contains a few images, two of which—Bhagavatī and Dakṣiṇāmūrti—may be dated stylistically to the ninth century. The Kṛishṇa temple, facing the east, is an example of *alpa-vimāna*, built in Drāviḍa style. Located on the south-western corner of the principal shrine, it stands on a podium of much larger dimensions. It is also an example of *sama-chaturāśra-vimāna*, with square *grīvā* and *śikhara*, the latter as usual pinnaced by a *stūpī*. A narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa* comes out of the *garbha-griha*, graced by a standing four-armed image of Viṣṇu in late style. Its walls do not appear to be old but the *hamsa-valabhī* and *simha-mālā* above the *kapṛta* partake of features contemporary to the Chōḷa association of the complex. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, flattish *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *vyāla-mālā* and *paṭṭikā*. The podium, however, has the characteristic Kerala style of *adhishṭhāna*, for it comprises *upāna*, *jagatī*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*: most likely, it may be dated to the ninth or tenth century.

Munjira: Śiva temple in Tirumalai temple-complex

(Fig. 8)

In the Tirumalai temple-complex, situated on a low hillock, at Munjira, in the Vilavankod Taluk of District Kanyakumari, stands a square Drāviḍa-*vimāna* meant for Śiva. It has been built of granite up to the *kapṛta*, above which rises the brick superstructure. Like the temple at Parthivapuram, its axial division consists of square sanctum, a narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa* and a front portico. Another similarity is the provision of three entrances to the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. Unlike the portico of the Pārthasārathi temple, the columns of the Munjira temple are *vyāla*-based though they are overtopped by *pushpa-pṛtikās*.

The *adhishṭhāna* of the sanctum shows *upāna*, *jagatī*, octogonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas*, followed by railed *vēdikā*. Alternate recesses and projections of the walls descend down right up to the bottommost part of the *adhishṭhāna*. But this is not the case with the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the walls of which are relieved only by *kuḍya-stambhas*. There cannot be any doubt that the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, which has cross-corbels with upward lotuses as against the bevelled corbels of the sanctum, was added much latter. Thus originally the temple consisted of a square sanctum without a *mukha-maṇḍapa*: but it is hard to say whether it carried a *dvitala* superstructure as it does now. The shrine is without a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*.

The nucleus of the Śiva temple at Munjira should go back even prior to the establishment of the Parthivapuram temple in A.D. 857. Significantly, the *Muñchirai-maḍam* still has the rights of *pushpāñjalī* in the Mahādēva temple at Valiasalai. It was, again,

the Muñchirai assembly that sold the land to the king for the construction of the Parthivapuram temple. In an inscription, of the Rājendra Chōḷa (1012-44), engraved on a rock in the outer *prākāra* of the Tirumalai temple-complex, the god has been called Muñchirai-tirumalai-dēvar.¹ An inscription dated in Kollam 610 in the reign of the Travancore king Vira-Kēraḷa-Mārttāṇḍavarman of Kīlappērūr refers to some offerings to the Tirumalai Mahādēva temple.² All this may show that its nucleus goes back to very early times, and the sanctum may have been erected in the early part of the ninth century.

To the north of the Śiva temple, stands the shrine for Viṣṇu constructed in Kerala style, with a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front. The temple seems to have come up in the early seventeenth century.

Vilinjāṁ: Śiva temple

(Plate IX; fig. 19)

According to Kramrisch the small shrines of Vilinjāṁ, in Neyyatinkara Taluk, District Trivandrum, belong to the ninth century and are comparable to the contemporary Chōḷa shrines at Tiruppur, Kaliyappatti and other sites in the Pudukkottai area.³ It is a small complex consisting of a square Śiva shrine and a rectangular shrine for Bhagavatī. Known generally as the Bhagavatī temple, both the shrines face north, and are situated to the west of the famous rock-cut cave. They are made partly of stone and partly of brick.

Since the time of Kramrisch, the Bhagavatī shrine, meant for enshrining *Sapta-mātrikās*, had undergone complete renovation, while the Śiva temple, despite repairs and recent plasterings, retains much of its original character. The brick superstructure of the Bhagavatī shrine has been completely removed and the walls are now built of ashlar masonry. Nevertheless, the plan remains undisturbed as the stone-built base is still intact. We propose to discuss about the Bhagavatī shrine in the next section.

The Śiva temple is a small *ekatala-vimāna* built on a square plan, and has a brick-built *grīvā* and *śikhara*. The stone *adhishṭhāna* is of the *mañchaka* type, rather unusual for temples of early medieval times. There is hardly any temple of the Pallava, Pāṇḍya or Chōḷa origin, which does not have *kumuda* in the *adhishṭhāna*. In Kerala, *mañchaka* type of *adhishṭhāna* has been used in later temples but none of them can be dated prior to the fourteenth/fifteenth century. However, the *mañcha* type can be noticed in some early *Mātrikā* shrines of Tuḷunāḍu and Śiva temples of Draksharama and Bhimavaram in Andhra Pradesh. But structurally, the one at Vilinjāṁ cannot be dated before the fifteenth century; it is further vouched by the curved *praṇāla* with a bud-like end, a feature which evolved soon after the emergence of the *pushpa-pōtikā* some time in the thirteenth century. At the same time, its overall shape recalls an architectural tradition of the eighth or the ninth century as already

¹Travancore Archaeological Series, VI, p. 148.

²Travancore Archaeological Series, VII, p. 20.

³Kramrisch, Cousins and Poduval (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 16. Some of these temples are now ascribed to the Pāṇḍyas.

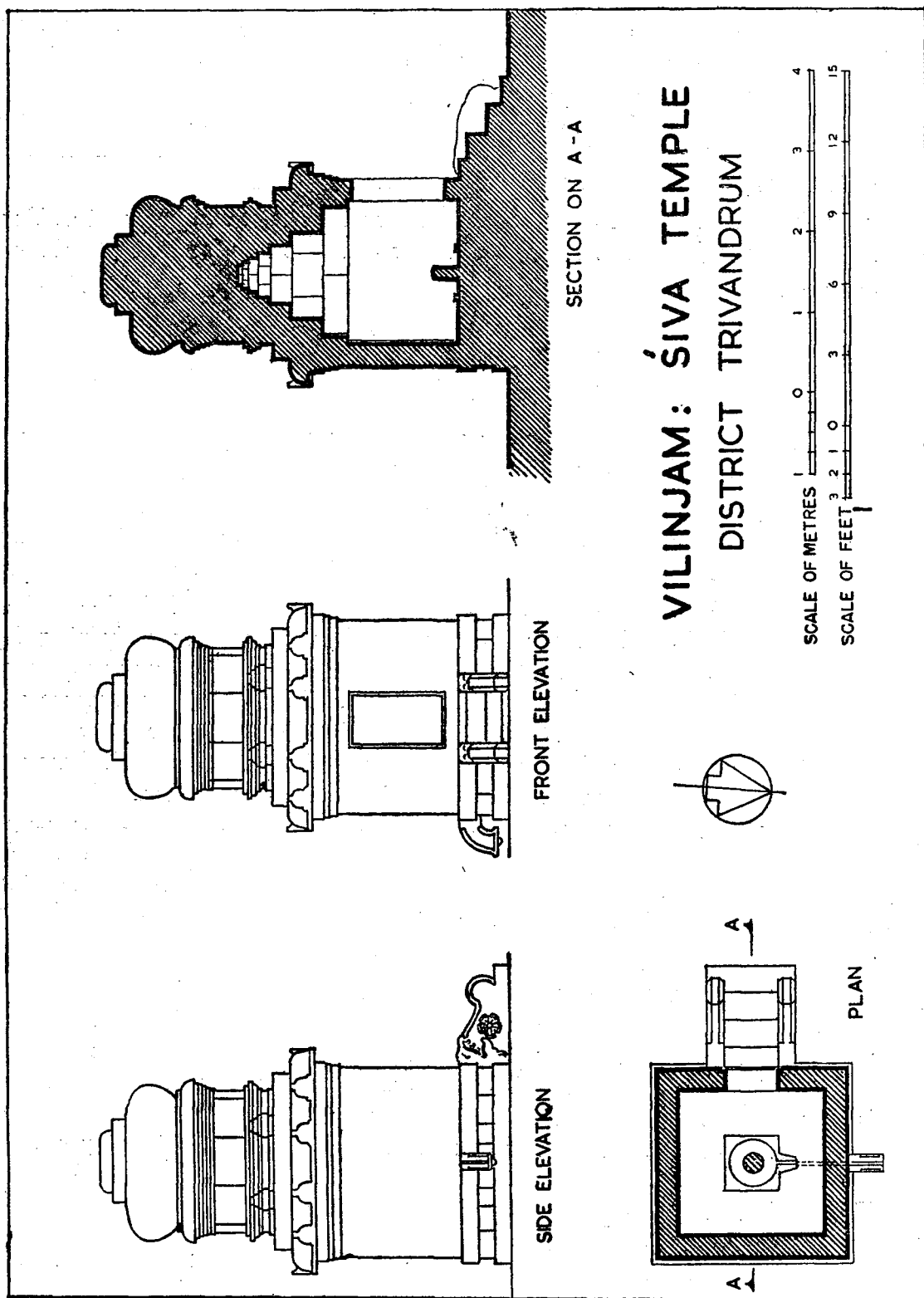


FIG. 19

suggested by Kramrisch. This, coupled with the fact of its association with two early images (p. 106), may show that the temple might have come into existence by the late eighth or the early ninth century.

C. RECTANGULAR DRĀVIḌA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

It is quite likely that Āy country during the eighth and the ninth centuries witnessed the growth of the *Mātrikā* cult. In fact, it was a widespread movement throughout the west coast as stray *Mātrikā* images or shrines have been discovered not only in the Ālupa territory but also in the kingdom of the Chēras. But rectangular shrines for *Mātrikā* images though common in the Tuḷu country are rare in other parts of the west coast. However, the Tirumāndhānkunṇu Bhagavatī temple at Angadippuram, in Perintal-manna Taluk, District Malappuram, is a rectangular shrine in the Chēra country. Here is a *Mātrikā* shrine built on regular *adhishṭhāna*, which consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils in between the *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. A *padma-pādukā* serves as its optional member below the *adhishṭhāna*. The temple unfortunately has undergone thorough alteration.

It is well-known that the rectangular temples were built also to enshrine the reclining figure of Viṣṇu. This is also a very old trend that attained popularity in the Āy country at least from the early years of the ninth century, if not earlier. Mention has already been made about the rectangular plan of the temples at Trivandrum, and Tiruvattar, both being associated with the Anantaśāyī form of Viṣṇu. Both these Āy monuments were sung by Nammālvār, a fact that strengthens the hypothesis that both the temples came into prominence even before the ninth century. Now the question that remains to be answered is whether they were built in Drāviḍa or Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style. Frankly speaking, it is difficult to settle the issue. But if the present form is any indication then both were built in indigenous Kerala style, unlike the Bhagavatī temple at Viliṅjam. It was certainly the case with the Ādikēśava-perumāḷ temple at Tiruvattar since it did not pass through so many calamities as the Śrī Padmanābhasvāmī temple at Trivandrum. The latter passed through its major renovation in the first half of the eighteenth century and the work seems to have started in A.D. 1729. A part of this temple caught fire in 1934, followed by another reconstruction.¹

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Viliṅjam: Bhagavatī temple

(Pl. V; fig. 20)

The Bhagavatī temple at Viliṅjam, in Neyyatinkara Taluk, District Trivandrum, is an unpretentious Drāviḍa shrine, located almost near the sea. Facing the north, the temple

¹Kramrisch, Cousins and Poduval (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 51.

has undergone thorough modification in recent times. It is evident from the old photograph that the brick superstructure consisted of four-sided *grīvā* and *śikhara*. Built on a *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna*, its *garbha-griha*, without a circumambulatory, is rectangular on plan, having a small portico in front. Walls are plain and made of ashlar masonry. A flight of steps, flanked by archaic-looking banister on either side, is in the centre of the portico. The early images, one of them being of Kaumārī, are placed on either side of the *sōpāna*.

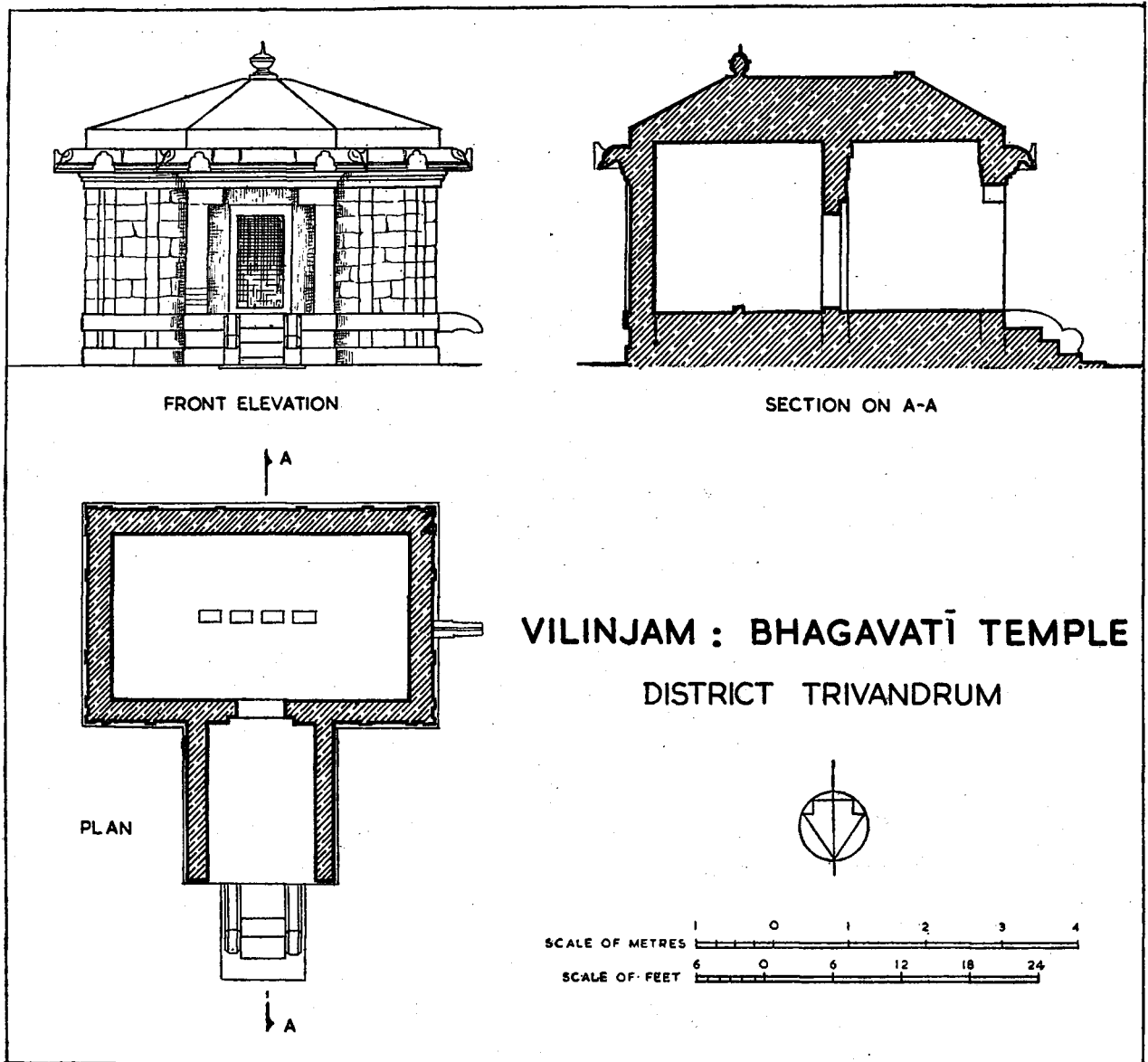


FIG. 20

The plan of the temple is very simple but comparable to that of the Rājārājēśvarī temple at Polali and the Virabhadra temple at Udaiyavara, near Udipi, District South Kanara. These two temples have also no *adhishṭhāna* in the real sense of the term. And this

basic similarity between the two geographically-separated units discloses an early trend that had a wide spatial distribution so far as the west coast is concerned. The associated sculptures, as reported earlier (p. 106), are datable to the eighth century; and as one of the images there is identified as Kaumārī, it is certain that the rectangular *nirandhāra* shrine originally enshrined a panel of *mātrikā* images now survived by a lone example at the site.

D. SQUARE DRĀVIḌA-KĒRAḌA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

The Āy country was the meeting ground of two temple-styles: Drāviḍa and Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa, and examples of both the styles are found here. On the basis of the clues supplied by epigraphy or sculptures, a few Drāviḍa shrines of square or rectangular plan, have been ascribed to the Āys. But it is hard to assign firmly any square Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa temples to this line of rulers. On circumstantial evidence, however, the Mahādēva temple at Kazhakuttam has been ascribed to the Early phase when the Āys still held the rein of their supremacy over south Kerala.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Kazhakuttam: Mahādēva temple

(Pls. VI-VII, and VIIIA; figs. 7 and 21)

The Mahādēva temple at Kazhakuttam, in Trivandrum Taluk, District Trivandrum, is a square *dvitala-vimāna*, consisting of a square sanctum and a *mukha-maṇḍapa*. The front part of the *mukha-maṇḍapa* has been surrounded by another structure known as *tiruchchurru-maṇḍapa*, constructed by one Dāmōdiraṇ-Kaṇḍaṇ in Kollam 645 (A.D. 1470).¹ He was also responsible, as the inscription says, for covering certain parts of the temple with copper and performing the consecration ceremony of the God. During this operation *mukha-maṇḍapa* and its columns—four in the inner row and ten in the outer—seem to have been repaired or added. For, the *adhishṭhāna* mouldings of the *mukha-maṇḍapa* are not exactly the same as those of the *garbha-griha*, the former containing floral and other decorations in the *kaṇṭha*. It is not unlikely that the original temple belongs to the category of temples without *mukha-maṇḍapa*. The *tiruchchurru-maṇḍapa* separates the temple unit from the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, built on a *mañcha* type of base.

The *vimāna* proper of the temple-complex retains much of its older forms. Its *adhishṭhāna*, made of granite, consists of *upāna*, a short *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* in between the *kampas*, *uttara*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*; another *paṭṭikā*-like moulding interposed between the *kapōta* and the *vēdikā* may be the *vājana*. The *gala-pādas* of the *kaṇṭha* are in

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, pp. 33-34.

continuation of the *kuḍya-stambhas* or the pilasters of the *bhitti*. In wall-decorations, one observes some notable variations as compared to those of the Chēra region. Of course, walls here are made of laterite blocks—and consequently the decorative motifs as well. In the *bhadra* centre of each wall is a wooden door, starting from above the *adhishṭhāna*, flanked on either side by decorated wall-pilasters, carrying either bevelled or *tarāṅga pōtikās*. In the *hārāntara* is a false niche enclosing a *jāla*: it has an attic niche carrying in each case a seated deity. Another interesting feature of the wall-decoration here is the interfusion of the *hāra*

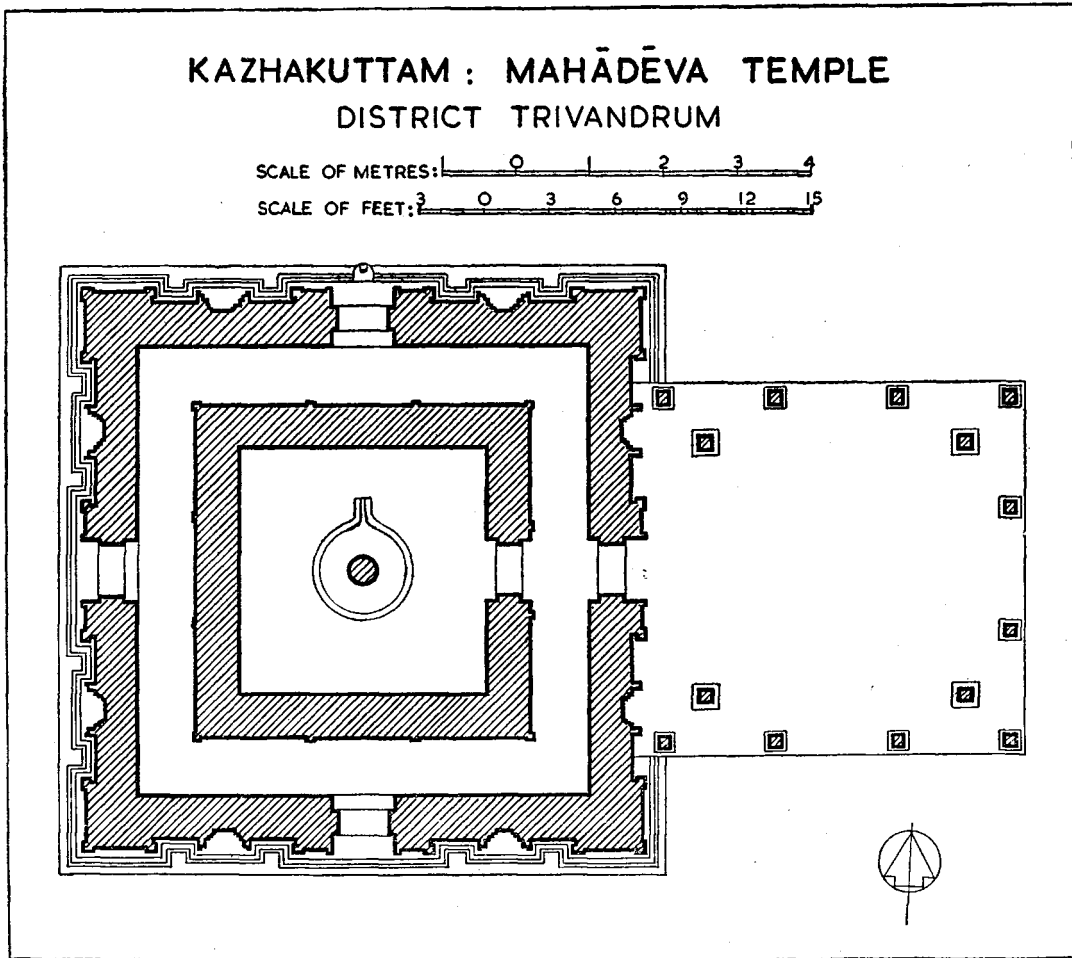


FIG. 21

with the niches or other motifs of the walls. Thus, the *pañjara* of the *hāra* constitutes the top of the functional door, and two *kuḍya-stambhas* on either side as if carrying the *pañjaras* on top. Likewise, *hārāntara-kōshṭhas* rise up above the *śālās*, with pronounced *nāśā-pañjaras* as their superstructures, while the *kūṭas* are held by two pilasters of the last bay. In this temple *valabhī*, below the *kapōta*, has dentil course instead of *bhūtas* or *haṁsa-mālā*, while above the *prastara* runs a *siṁha-mālā*. Above the *hāra* comes the sloping timber-roof covered with copper sheets; the *hāras* on the square *grīvā* are not as realistic as those

of the *āditala*. Possibly the part above the upper *prastara* was repaired or replaced during the sixteenth century. In the same phase, the wooden bracket-figures of both the *talas*, and the wooden images on the *grīvā-kāshṭhas* must have come into existence.

The temple belongs to the *sāndhāra* class of the classical order—the inner walls or *āntara-bhitti* being made entirely of granite. The *garbha-griha* enshrines a *liṅga* in the centre. Furthermore, it is also a *sarvatōbhadra* type of temple in that it has four functional doors at four cardinal directions.

The temple-complex has a number of sub-shrines and the one inside the inner *prākāra*, to the north of the main temple, is dedicated to Śiva. Outside the first *prākāra* stand the Gaṇapati shrine, Kṛishṇa temple of the Drāviḍa style, with octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*, Viṣṇu shrine with a pyramidal roof, and a Śāstā temple, apsidal on plan. Of the five sub-shrines, the most important is the Viṣṇu shrine, on the north-eastern corner, associated with a standing image of Viṣṇu (pl. VIII A), datable to the ninth century (above, p. 107). It is also a small *sāndhāra* shrine.

On stylistic grounds and because of its association with an early image, the temple may be dated to the ninth century. But it is difficult to decide if the Āys were in any way directly associated with its construction.

E. CIRCULAR DRĀVIDA-KĒRAḶA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

There is a high frequency of circular shrines in south Kerala but the number of shrines belonging to the Early phase is too small. In fact, there is only one circular shrine, in the Āy country, which may be placed in this period by virtue of its association with an inscription of Karunandaḍakkaṇ.

Table II below (p. 183) furnishes a list of circular temples whose diameters could be obtained in the course of the present survey, and it will be evident therefrom, that the early circular temples like the ones at Perumpaladur in the Āy country, Polpulli, in the Chēra kingdom, and Ramantali in the Mushika territory, range in diameters from 3·43 m to 7·58 m. Obviously, the early circular temples were not of gigantic proportions compared to those of the Middle phase.

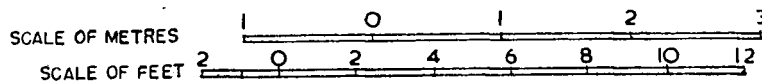
(ii) DESCRIPTION

Perumpaladur: the site of Nāraṇattukkāvu

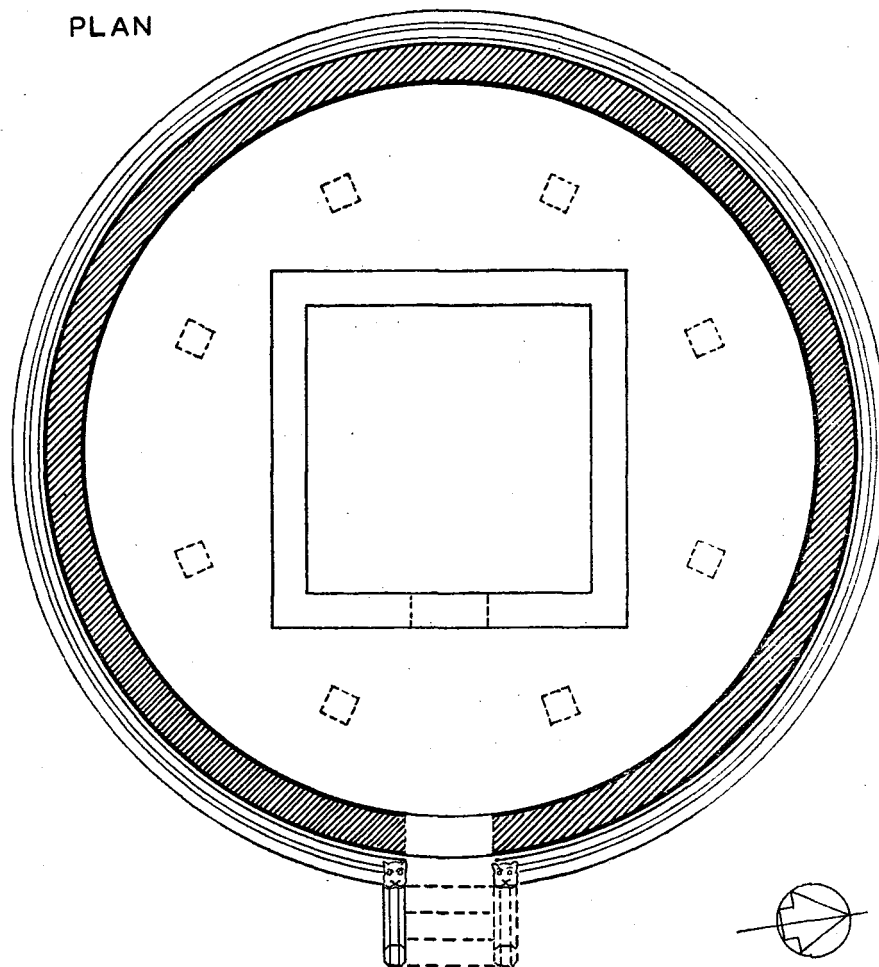
(Figs. 8 and 22)

The site of Nāraṇattukkāvu at Perumpaladur, in Neyyatinkara Taluk, District Trivandrum, has yielded an inscription of the Āy king Karunandaḍakkaṇ, the builder of the Parthivapuram temple. While the latter was built in the ninth regnal year, the temple

PERUMPALADUR: VISHṆU TEMPLE
DISTRICT TRIVANDRUM



PLAN



ELEVATION

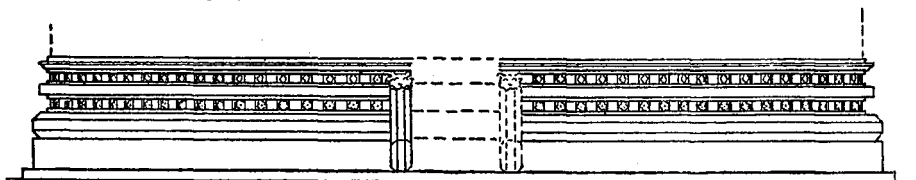


FIG. 22

at Perumpaladur came up in the tenth regnal year i.e., just one year after the construction of the other shrine; hence the date of construction of the present temple may be fixed at A.D. 858. The Vaṭṭeḷuttu inscription is engraved on a granite *balipīṭha* among the ruins of the temple at Nāraṇattukkāvu, situated on the banks of a rivulet. After the discovery of the inscribed *balipīṭha*, the site was excavated by the then Travancore Archaeological Department.¹ It led to the further discovery of the foundation of a circular shrine and a broken image of Viṣṇu, the whereabouts of the latter is not known to the present writer.

The inscription records the erection of the *balipīṭha* and a gift of land for offerings of *olukkavi* ('food') to the god at Tirunārāyaṇam.

The plan of the temple is that of a circular *sāndhāra-vimāna*, the circular outer wall surrounding a square *garbha-gṛha* with a row of columns in the *pradakṣiṇā-patha*. It is a ground-plan decidedly of a Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style, yet the plan seems to be characteristic of the Middle phase. Quite likely, the structure, save its circular plan, underwent wholesale renovation some time after A.D. 1000. One may arrive at the same conclusion after careful examination of the extant *adhishṭhāna*. The mouldings of the *adhishṭhāna* show *upāna*, *jagatī* octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. Along with the *pādas* in the *kaṇṭha* and *vēdikā* are to be seen floral designs in alternate succession. This type of decoration is not the characteristic of this age, and it becomes apparent when these mouldings are compared with those of the inscribed *balipīṭha*. In the latter case, the mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, a tall *kaṇṭha*, and finally a *padma*; it is the *kaṇṭha* part which bears the inscription.

A few miscellaneous facts about the ruined edifice may be detailed here. Columns of the temple are of simple variety showing alternately square and octagonal sections. The entrance, from the east, is through a *sōpāna* with *hasti-hasta* banisters. On either side of the *sōpāna* was a standing *dvāra-pāla* whose stone pedestal, as if held by a flying *gaṇa*, is still extant. It is not known if it had a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front. On the whole, the general plan and minor architectural details show that the present ruins pertain to the Middle phase of Kerala's temple-architecture. What may be safely assigned to the Early phase are the broad circular plan of the temple, and the inscribed *balipīṭha*, made of granite.

3. TEMPLES IN CHĒRA COUNTRY

A. INTRODUCTION

By and large, the Chēras ruled over central Kerala although at a later stage their sway spread over the whole of the state. Whatever may be the extent of their political influence, central Kerala must have been the main sphere of their cultural, religious and architectural activities. There is also a definite concentration of early temples in this part, some of them being really of grand proportions. Some minor ruling families

¹Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy, 1961-62, no. B. 135.

under the aegis of the Chēras also took to temple-building. Of them, the most well-known was the king of Valluvanāḍu—the celebrated family that produced a famous Chaturānana Paṇḍita of Tīruvoṭṭiyūr-*maṭha*, near Madras. In the area of Valluvanāḍu, temples built on an apsidal plan attained some popularity. But no apsidal shrine belonging to this phase is known either from the Āy or the Mūshika areas despite the fact that the Ālupas of Tuḷunāḍu built temples of similar ground-plan as early as the first quarter of the eighth century. At any rate, the square shrine was the most popular form so far as the Early phase is concerned in all the three areas. They are mostly *sama-chaturāśra-vimāna*, with a square *śikhara*. Both Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa and pure Drāviḍa styles were in vogue side by side, the latter constituting a negligible proportion.

B. SQUARE DRĀVIḌA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

There are only a few Drāviḍa shrines in the land of the Chēras despite their old and intimate contact with the ancient ruling families of the Tamiḷ country. Most of the leading dynasties, as it is known to all, fostered the architecture in stone, a material used mostly in memorials. That was why the new trend never evoked any interest in the minds of the early Nāyanmārs and the Ālvārs who went on singing in praise of gods enshrined in humbler dwellings. But what did those simple abodes of god looked like? Quite likely, such temples were built of brick, wood or other perishable material, and had sloping roofs like the Chidambaram temple or its representation in the murals of the Brīhadiśvara temple at Thanjavur. In other words, what we call Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style was possibly a universal phenomenon throughout the south. And, ironically, what is called Drāviḍa is now merged with our idea of soaring mansions in stone, which may be an intrusive element in the temple-architecture of the south.

The new tradition which began in the late sixth century failed to make any headway in the Chēra country because of the resistance that it possibly received from the orthodox section of the society. It was only during the Chōḷa times that the new medium of construction achieved its respectful position. Even then the Chēra country failed to accept the new trend because of unfavourable climatic factors that helped indirectly in perpetuating the conservative outlook of the people. The practice of using stone reached Kerala with the idea of cave-temples, and was then transmitted to the structural shrines. But it is not known for certain whether the laterite block was considered as stone. Nevertheless, the Drāviḍa structural temples in stone, which began some time in the early eighth or at best late seventh century, had practically no appeal to the people of Chēra-maṇḍalam. In the circumstances, its rarity in the Chēra country is obvious.

There is only one example of Drāviḍa shrine, ascribable to the Early phase, in the Chēra country, and this too is an unfinished temple, in granite, at Netirimangalam, in District Palghat.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Netirimangalam: Śiva temple

(pl. X; figs. 8 and 23)

The Śiva temple at Netirimangalam, near Pattambi, in Ottapalam Taluk, District Palghat, is an unfinished granite temple, originally built up to the height of the *prastara*. A laterite superstructure has been added to it to transform it into a *dvitala-prāsāda* having square *grīvā* and tiled pyramidal *śikhara*. In front of the temple, which faces the east, stands a recently-built *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, apart from a well. To the north of the Śiva temple is the modestly-built Kṛishṇa shrine, circular on plan. Inside this small shrine, which is

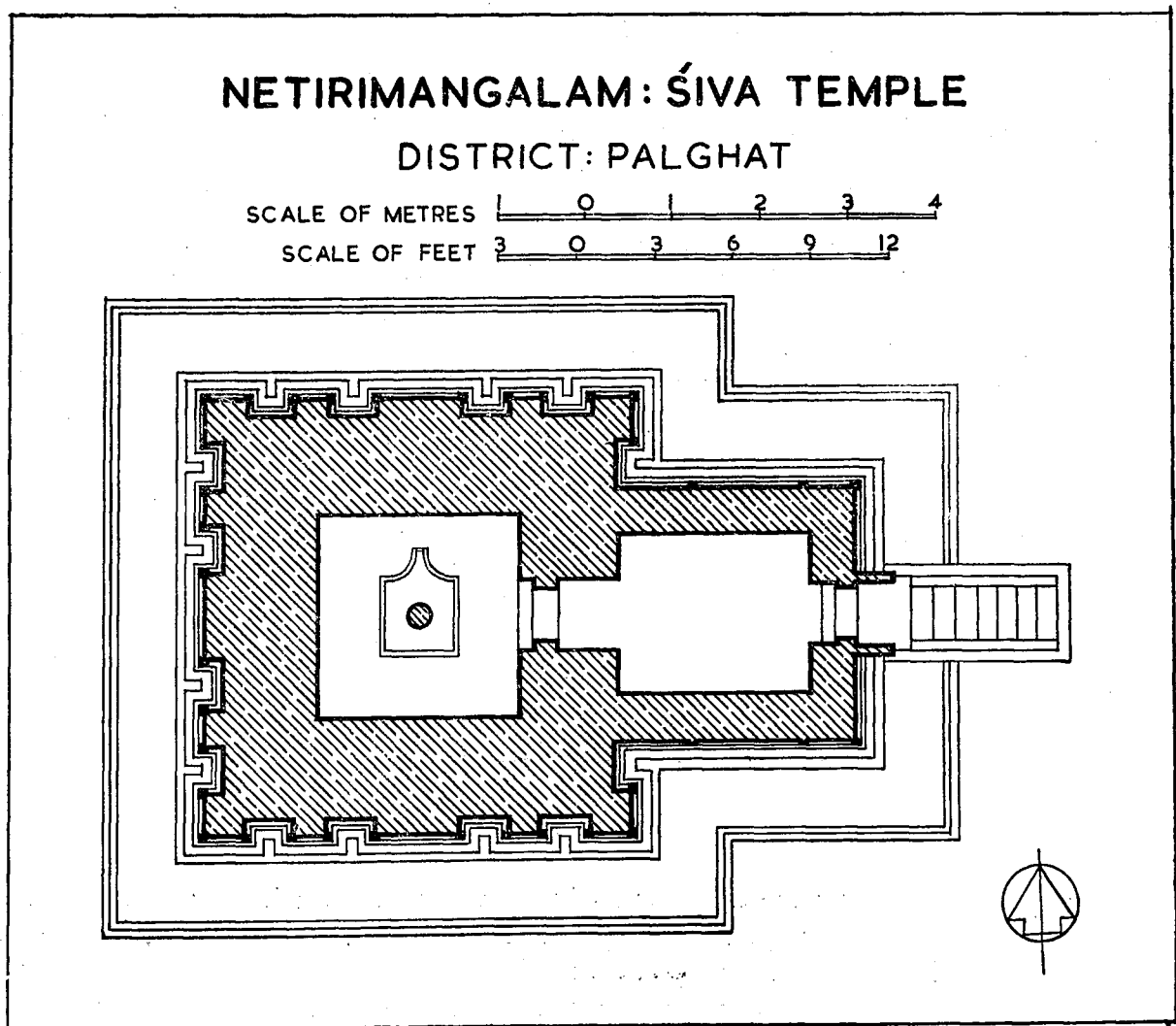


FIG. 23

square internally, is housed a mutilated image of Viṣṇu. Undoubtedly, the shrine has to be dated later than the adjacent Śiva temple.

The present superstructure is wholly incongruous with the unfinished granite part of the temple, dedicated to Śiva. As will be shown, the granite part itself has two phases, the earlier one being represented merely by its *adhishṭhāna* at present serving as the *upapīṭha* of the granite edifice. Its mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, high *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* in between the *kampas*, followed by a very heavy moulding perhaps representing the *valabhī*, and the *kapōta*. Such high *kaṇṭha* with *pādas* can be seen in the Śiva temple at Kandiur and also in the rock-cut shrine of Kaviyur. There is, again, an additional member below the *upāna* of the present *upapīṭha*.

The temple proper stands on the earlier *adhishṭhāna* leaving a walk all round. On plan, it consists of a square *garbha-griha* projecting a narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa*. Its *adhishṭhāna* comprises mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with a dentil course in between the *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. Above the *adhishṭhāna* rises the *vēdikā*. From the *kaṇṭha* of the *adhishṭhāna* issues out the *praṇāla* held in *śiṃha-mukha*. Divided into five bays, the *adhishṭhāna* as well as the *bhitti* are built of granite slabs bearing rough surface and chisel-marks. Yet it is possible to have an idea of the wall-ornamentations that were intended to be carried out. The *bhitti* was to be relieved with *kuḍya-stambhas*, *tōraṇas* with *makara*-arches or *śālā-sikharas*. All the wall-pilasters have tetragonal section and carry bevelled cross-corbels. But the *mukha-maṇḍapa* is without any projection and return though relieved by *kuḍya-stambhas* and other motifs. Here we come across an interesting aspect of the method of construction—the technique of executing various motifs and wall-decorations only after fixing the slabs into the walls. Such a method of construction was followed widely by the Pallava architects in building structural temples in stone. But it seems that it had no provision for real *dēva-kōshṭhas* or wall-sculptures. The *prastara* is represented by unfinished *kapōta*, with *nāsikās* at regular intervals.

The temple is a *nirandhāra prāsāda* without an inner ambulatory. It had no *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in the original layout either. As it is not associated with any sculpture or inscription, it is not easy to arrive at the date of the structure. Stylistically, it may be dated to the latter half of the tenth century; and in that case, the earlier *adhishṭhāna* may belong to the ninth century.

C. SQUARE DRĀVIḌA-KĒRALA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

It is proposed to describe a few *sama-chaturāsra-vimānas*, which have retained some of their old characters, in the Chēra country. But it has to be remembered that there are many more sites whose beginning may go back to the same period, notwithstanding their wholesale transformation due to constant repairs and renovation. Often a stray sculpture or an isolated inscription stands there as the mute sentinel of one's very early existence. Sometimes, the older architectural vestiges remain hidden under the successive layers of

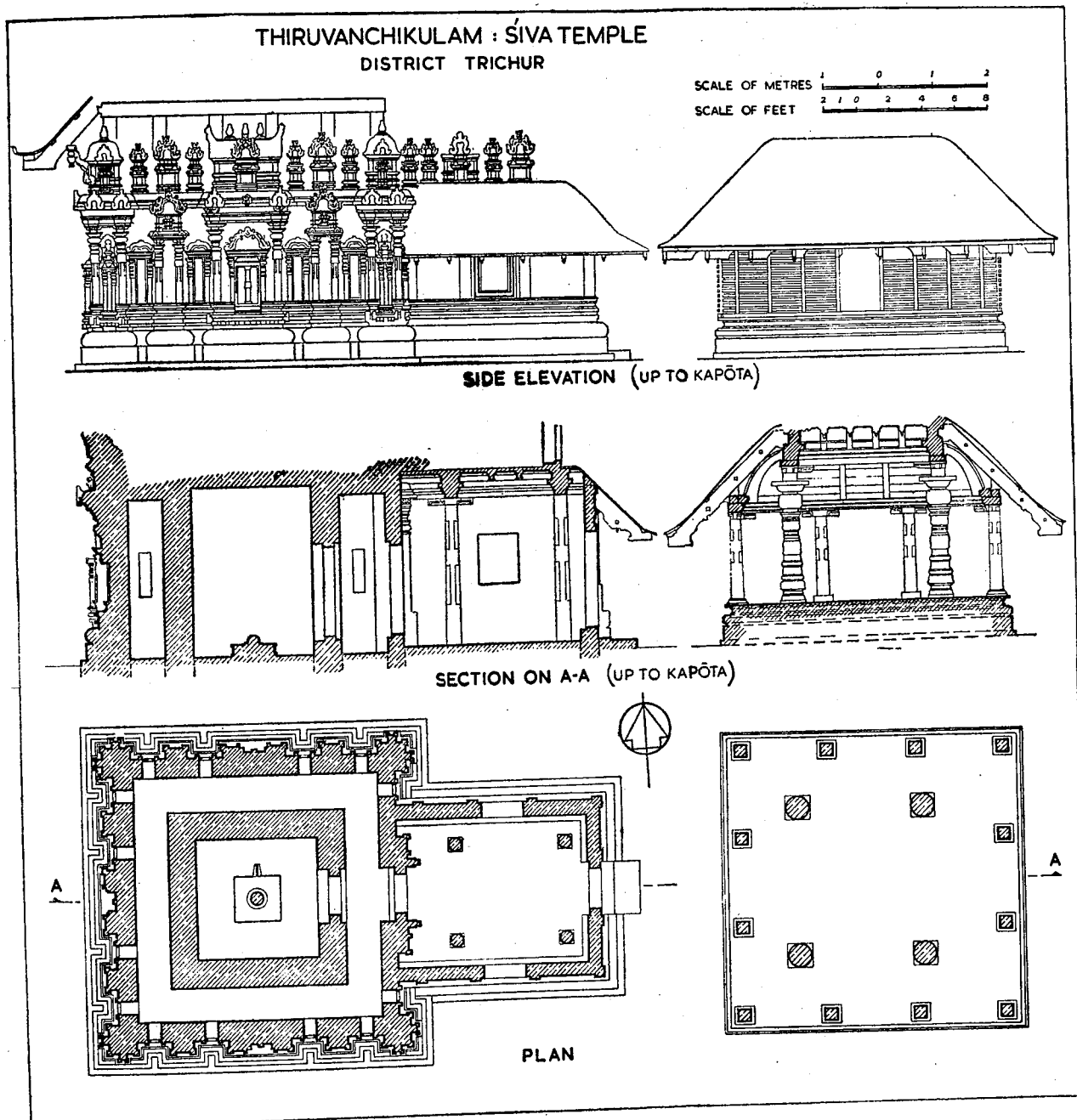


FIG. 24

later accretions. A few examples of this category of sites may be given here with a view to presenting a somewhat clearer picture of the architectural history under the Chēras of Mahōdayapuram.

Two sites that first come to mind are the Śiva temple at Thiruvanchikulam (pl. XX A) and the Bhagavatī temple at Kodungalur, both located near the royal capital. Tradition has it that Rājaśēkhara, the successor of Kulaśēkharavarman, patronized the Śiva temple at Thiruvanchikulam or more precisely Tiruvanchikkaḷam. Rājaśēkhara is none else than Chēramāṇ Perumāḷ Nāyanār, a close friend of Sundaramūrti; the latter seems to have breathed his last at this very place. This Śiva temple has lost much of its architectural features; consequently, it is difficult to include it in Early phase. Yet it is certainly an old temple-site with its nucleus going back to the early years of the ninth century. According to us, the presence of a number of subsidiary shrines bespeaks, generally speaking, of the importance that a complex enjoyed earlier. The Kiḷataḷi Śiva temple, though an old temple, might not have attained renown as the temple of Thiruvanchikulam, since the former is without a minor shrine, whereas the latter has about ten shrines including the principal one. A subsidiary Śiva shrine just outside the main complex has an *adhishṭhāna* with an inscription ascribable palaeographically to the twelfth century. The mouldings here consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with a dentil course, and *paṭṭikā*. In the circumstances, the main temple inside must have come up before this date; indeed there is a great likelihood of the main Śiva temple at Thiruvanchikulam coming into existence even before the time of Rājaśēkharavarman (c.A.D. 820-844) because it is said that as a boy he used to spend his time in meditation here.

The present temple, consisting of a square *garbha-griha* projecting a narrow *mukha-maṇḍapa*, is a *dvitala-vimāna*, facing the east, and having a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front. Inside the sanctum is housed a square *garbha-griha*, which is itself a Drāviḍa shrine; this feature is characteristic of the Middle phase. It is thus certain that the temple must have undergone renovation during the eleventh or twelfth century. The latest renovation took place, as the two epigraphs testify in clear terms, in the eighteenth century. Two *ślokas* in Malayāḷam characters, engraved on the eastern base of the *surru-maṇḍapa* state that king Rāmavarman of Cochin had the *dīpa-māḍam* ('lamp-pavilion') raised by his ministers for the god Vañchuḷēśa. The date expressed in the chronogram, *dorddaṇḍam-yajñajushṭam* and *dōhō ślōkānujushṭē* in the two verses, correspond to Kali day 1801388 i.e., Kollam 1006. Another Sanskrit verse, in Malayalam characters, found on the east and south bases of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, refers to one Gōvinda, the Pāliyēśa, who restored the temple of Vañchuḷēśa, desecrated some time back by a *śāstra-bāhya* or heretic. The reconstruction took place, as the chronogram *nyakshoṇnaddha saukhyam* shows in Kali day 1790591 i.e., Kollam 976.¹ It is likely that the heretic mentioned in the inscription is Tipu Sulṭān.

In spite of these renovations, the temple-style, by and large, is reminiscent of the early phase and its laterite-built walls are divided into *bhadrās* and *kaṇṣas*. However, it has *ghana-dvāras* and *jālas*, apart from the *kudya-stambhas* and *pañjaras*. Perhaps reconstruction

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, pp. 191-92.

of the temple followed closely the original layout and elevation, and in that case, one can say that it is a temple with its foundation going back to the early phase.

Similarly, the Bhagavatī temple at Kodungalur (pl. XIX A), the most famous of the Bhagavatī shrines, is shorn of all its older features although the traditional accounts may easily take its history back to an early period. But our effort to see if some architectural vestiges are still available to support the tradition did not meet with any success. Mention has, however, been made about the presence of an image of Chāmuṇḍā, datable to the eighth century (above, p. 106) in one of the sub-shrines here, and this small evidence proves beyond doubt the high antiquity of the site.

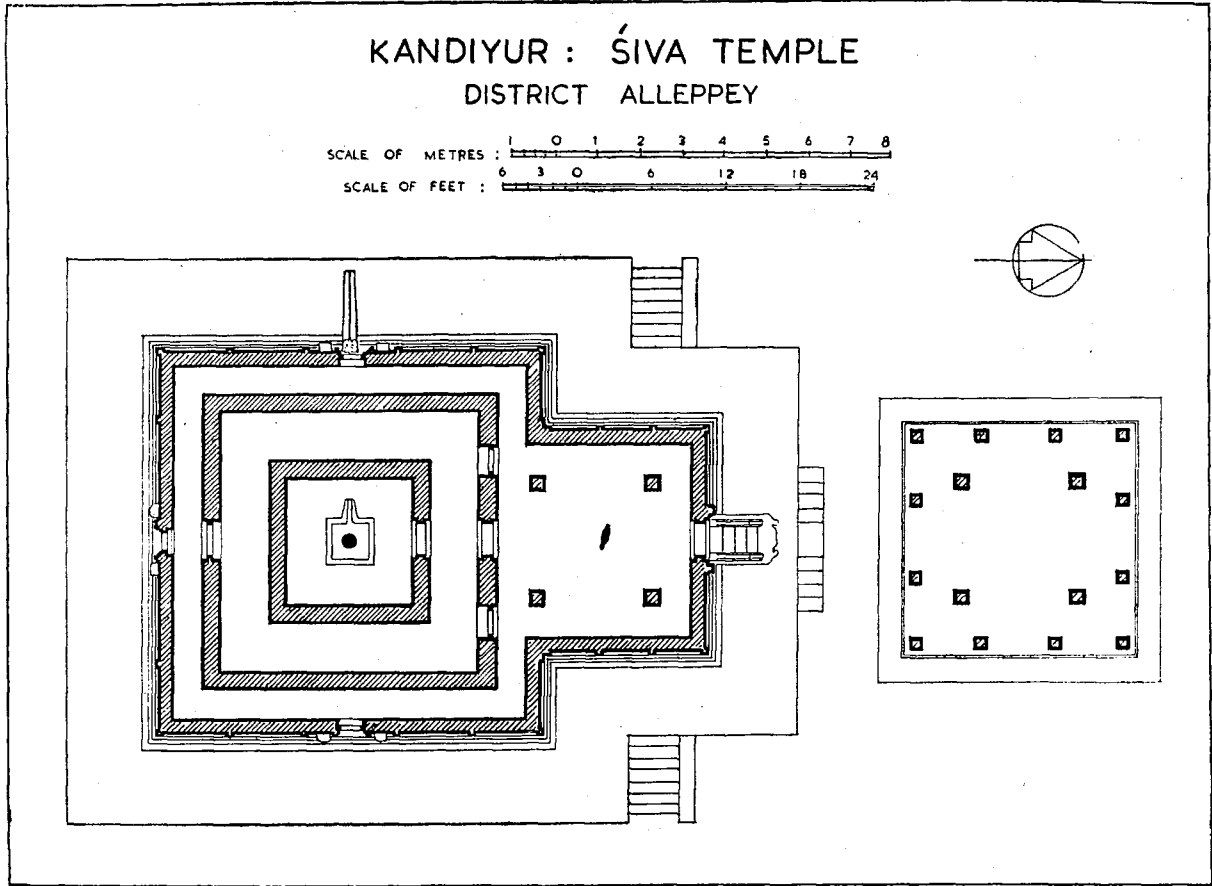


FIG. 25

Sometimes the older *adhishṭhāna* escaped complete ravages, and despite later additions, it provides indubitable testimony of its early origin. One of the earliest datable temples—the Śiva temple at Kandiur built in A.D. 823—perhaps retains its earliest base (pl. XX B), now partially covered by the present flooring. In fact, this base serves as the *upapīṭha* and its mouldings, as can be clearly guessed, consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, a very high *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* in between the *kampas*, *uttara*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*. That this part has been used subsequently as the *upapīṭha* is apparent from the alignment of the two

praṇālas—one coming out of the temple proper and the other from the *upapīṭha*. The *upapīṭha* of the temple serves something like the *jagatī*-platform, vaguely anticipating the later Hoysala tradition.

The Śiva temple in the Gaṇapati-kshētram at Indyanur, District Malappuram, is also an example of this sort. Its general appearance and the classical *sāndhāra* character, typical of the *dvitala-vimāna* of the period, may justify its inclusion in the Early phase. Moreover, the *upapīṭha*, on which the present edifice stands, seems to be the remnants of a granite *adhishṭhāna*, consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, over which has been laid a thick slab. Whatever may be the architecture of the temple, antiquity of the complex cannot be doubted because of the discovery of Chēra inscriptions here. The inscription belongs to one Kō-Kōdai-Ravi (above, p. 31) and records a gift of land to the temple. There is another inscription here of one Kō-Śrīvālārāma, in characters of the twelfth century; in this epigraph the place is referred to as Indiyānur.

Mention may be made of the famous temple of Santānagōpāla-Kṛishṇasvāmin at Tripunittura, District Ernakulam, because of its association with Kōdai-Ravi's (917-44) inscription, dated to his thirtieth regnal year (A.D. 947). The original temple, but for the eastern *gōpura*, was burnt down some time in 1920. In all probability, it was a *dvitala-vimāna*, built on a square plan.

It is then evident that there are several sites in the Chēra country, the history of which may go back to the Early phase. A few temples that are being described below should not, therefore, be taken as the only remains of this phase. It is hoped that these select examples will provide a clear picture regarding the architectural form of the *sama-chaturāśra-vimānas* of the Chēra country.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Tirukkulasekharapuram: Kṛishṇa temple

(Pls. XI, XII and XIII; figs. 7, 12, and 26)

Tirukkulasekharapuram and its temple are famous for their association with Kulaśēkhara Ālvār who seems to have raised, as the tradition goes, this fine edifice. Situated near Thiruvanchikulam, District Trichur, the place originally must have been a suburb of the Chēra capital Mahōdayapuram. It is one of the few temples with many of its original features still untampered. Though it is called Kṛishṇa temple, the main deity in the sanctum is that of a standing four-armed Viṣṇu with *śaṅkha* and *chakra* in the back hands and lotus and *gadā* in the other two.

Axially, the temple consists of a square *garbha-griha*, facing the east, and a narrower pillared *mukha-maṇḍapa*—its *antarāla* or *ardha-maṇḍapa* being undefined. It appears from a close examination of the interior-plan that it has at present two circumambulatory paths, one of them blocked permanently. The outer *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* seems to be the original one which is formed by the *bāhya-bhitti* and the *āntara-bhitti*. An additional wall was constructed

TIRUKKULASEKHARAPURAM : KRISHNA TEMPLE

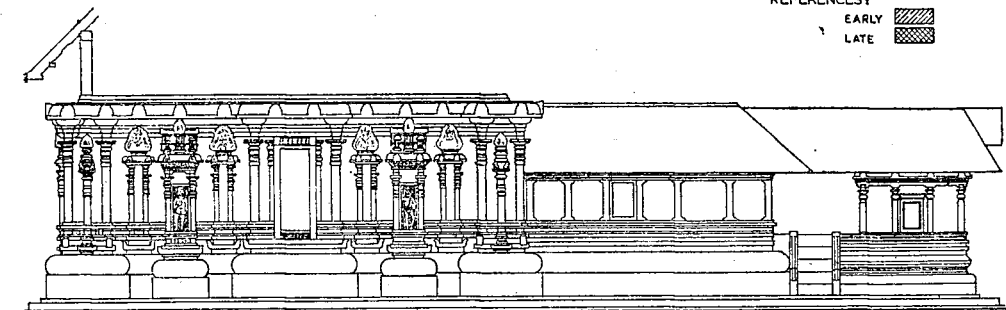
DISTRICT TRICHUR

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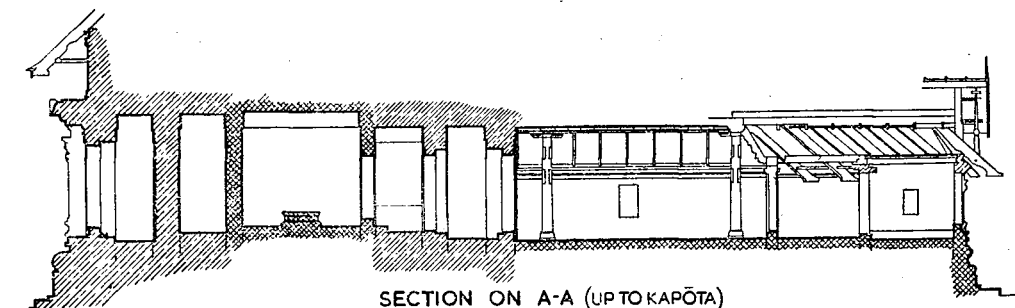
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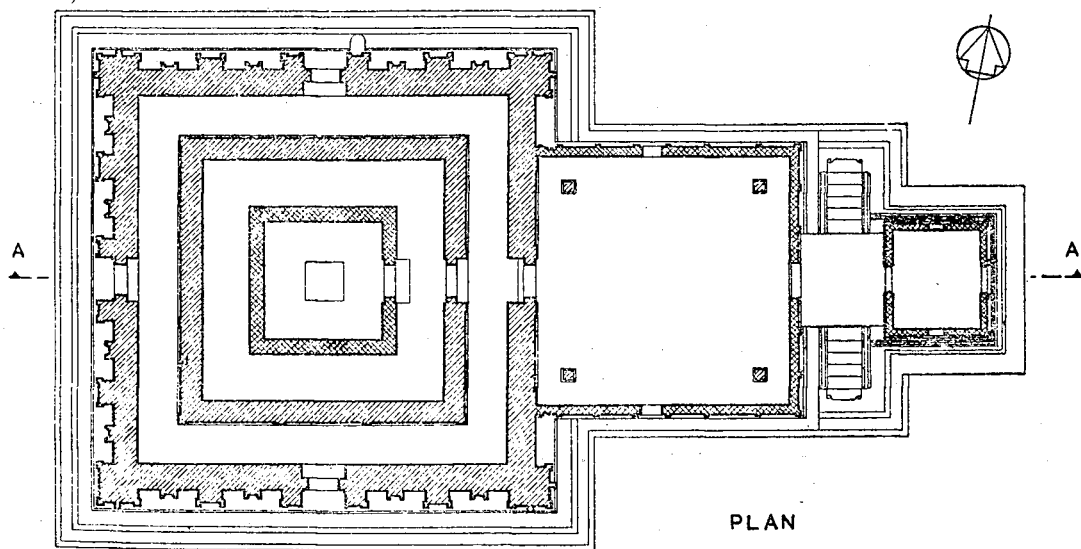
EARLY
LATE



SIDE ELEVATION (UP TO KAPŌTA)



SECTION ON A-A (UPTO KAPŌTA)



PLAN

FIG. 26

later all round the central part with a view to forming the present *garbha-griha*. The innermost walls of the later period rise above the ceiling of the *āditala* to become the square *grīvā*, or alternatively, the *dvitala*, carrying a tiled roof. Even the superstructure above the *kapōta* of the *āditala* has undergone considerable modifications. Furthermore, the walls of the *mukha-maṇḍapa* projecting out of the *garbha-griha* are devoid of the wall-ornamentations, characteristic of the *garbha-griha*. Originally it was without a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, the place of which is now occupied by a late *Garuḍa-maṇḍapa*, built on a square plan. The tiled roof of the *mukha-maṇḍapa* projects out of the lower roof of the *garbha-griha* like the *śuka-nāsa* of the Chālukyan tradition. It is then evident that the walls, specially the *bāhya-bhitti* of the square *garbha-griha* and its *pradakṣhiṇā-patha*, constitute the main feature of the complex. The narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa* might have also existed in the original set-up belonging to the Early phase, while the *dvitala* was completely substituted by another late structure.

Both original and the subsequent accretions are of laterite duly plastered over. What is more interesting is the carving of all images and architectural components in laterite. Thick lime-plaster over the sculptures and architectural motifs has practically blurred the original forms and their contours.

Naturally, the *adhishṭhāna* was also made of laterite blocks. Its mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampa*, *kaṇṭha*, and *paṭṭikā*. Here the projection of the *kampa* is almost the same as that of the *paṭṭikā*, and all the mouldings above the *kumuda* are highly recessed. For all practical purposes, the wall springs up from above the *kumuda*. Again, it is worth-noting that the mouldings above the *vṛitta-kumuda* as well as railed *vēdikā* above the *adhishṭhāna* proper do not run in horizontal alignments. As a matter of fact, the recessed mouldings above the *kumuda* are shown as inseparable parts of the *dēva-kōshṭhas* and *kuḍya-stambhas* of the *bhitti*. The only decorative element in the narrow *kaṇṭha* is the simple projection similar to *makara*-terminals on either end of the *karṇas* and *bhadras*. The *adhishṭhāna* mouldings are common in both the *garbha-griha* and the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. All round the temple runs a *paṭṭa*, of granite, practically below the level of the *upāna*.

All the three sides of the *vimāna-bhitti* are relieved with *karṇas* and *bhadras*, the latter with niched openings. Its *pāda* has the *brahma-kānta* pilasters, while the *karṇa*-parts have centrally-placed *vṛitta-sphuṭita*, without the *kumbha* member at the bottom. The *hārāntara*-recess in between the *bhadra* and the *karṇa* has *kapōta-pañjara*, used as *dēva-kōshṭha*, enshrining a standing two-armed image, perhaps representing a guardian deity. There are six such figures in all, two on each of the three sides. Although the headdress differs in each case, all of them are practically in the same pose. Of the six figures, the most important is the one in a southern niche. It wears an early type of *jaṭā-maṇḍala*, *kēyūras*, circular earrings, wide *udara-bandha*, broad *upavīta*, a short tunic with a characteristic short loop of early times, and anklets. The ends of the *vastra* dangle down as tassels at the sides. Its bent right arm is in the pose of touching the *udara-bandha*, while the other hand is broken below the waist. The figure in the other *dēva-kōshṭha* of the same wall wears likewise a short tunic and identical ornaments. Its left hand is also held in *kaṭi* and the right hand is upraised. But the headdress is of a different type in that the hair is tied up by different bands so as to

form a large ball at the top. Much of its original features now have been obliterated by the successive layers of stucco. Each *dēva-kōshṭha* of the western and northern walls enshrine standing figure wearing identical *vastra* and ornaments. They stand in *tribhaṅga* posture, with left hand resting on *kaṭi* and the right hand upraised.

This is the only temple in the Chēra country with functional *dēva-kōshṭhas* on the sanctum-wall. Quite naturally, the east face of the sanctum has only corner bays adorned with *vṛitta-sphuṭita*. But the most notable feature is the presence of doorway in the centre of each of the four walls being the characteristic of the *sarvatōbhadrā* type of temple. Thus, it is not only a *sāndhāra-vimāna* but also a *sarvatōbhadrā* temple with four functional openings on all the four sides, thereby enabling light to penetrate inside the sanctum.

Compared to the *prastara* of the *dēva-kōshṭhas*, which shows *bhūta-māla* on the *valabhī*, the *prastara* proper of the *vimāna* is plain but for the *nāsis*, each of them enclosing a human face. The *prastara* above the corner bays is slightly raised; as a result, the mouldings of the *prastara*, like those of the *adhishṭhāna*, do not run in uniform alignment. Above the *prastara* or entablature comes the parapet but without the *hāra*. Instead, an attempt has been made to transform it into a distinct *tala*, as there occurs a *ghana-dvāra* in the centre of each side. Evidently, at some stage of renovation the temple was conceived of as a *dvitala-vimāna*. In other temples of the *dvitala*-variety, one can see the *hāra* coming above the *prastara* as a regular feature.

The temple proper is surrounded by a cloistered *nālabalam*, serving also as the inner *prākāra*. Apart from the Garuḍa shrine and the well, it encloses an Ananta shrine with a *nāgakal* on the western. In the large outer *prākāra*, there are sub-shrines dedicated to Vāsudēva, Hanumān, Nandagōpal, Śiva known as Achchandēvaṇ, Mōhinī, Pārthasārathi and Gōvardhanadhārī. Of the sub-shrines, most of which are of late origin, the one for Gōvardhanadhārī, preserves some older features. It faces east and is located to the south of the main shrine. The *upapīṭha* of the shrine appears to have been the *adhishṭhāna* of an earlier shrine. Its mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, thin *vṛitta-kumuda*, high *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* in between the *kampas*, and the *kapōta*. The banisters of the *hasti-hasta* type have beautiful dancing figures, reminiscent of the Chōḷa plastic art.

It is evident from the foregoing description that the temple-complex retains some of its older sculptural and architectural features, which are akin largely to the Pallava tradition of the Tamiḷ country. Viewed from this point of view the beginning of the temple may be dated to the first quarter of the ninth century. A few Vaṭṭeḷuttu records copied from the temple do not, however, go beyond the eleventh century. The inscription found to the east of the Garuḍa shrine, and ascribable to the eleventh century on palaeographical considerations, may be helpful in deciding the date of foundation of the temple. It mentions, without giving any specific year, that the gift of gold has been made in the '195th year of the construction of the temple.' Thus on a rough calculation the foundation of the temple may be placed somewhere in the ninth century, and it conforms well with the tradition that the temple was built by Kulaśēkhara Āḷvār who has been given a date of c. A.D. 800-820. The epigraph records a gift of five *kalaṅṇu* of gold by Pōlaṇ Iravi of Vembalanāḍu, a guard of the temple treasury, and states that a dramatic performance was stipulated

to be enacted in the temple in a particular month.¹ Another inscribed slab, containing an early Vaṭṭeḷuttu record, which is an incomplete epigraph, is found fixed on the *prākāra*-floor near the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. On palaeographical grounds, the record may be dated to the twelfth century. It states that *nālu ta i* or 'the four assemblies' met unanimously on the Tiruvōṇam day in Aippigai month in the year when the Jupiter was in Iḍavam (Rishabha).²

Close to the Kṛishṇa temple, there is an independent complex dedicated to Śiva. It also appears to be an old establishment but now wholly remodelled excepting the *adhishṭhāna*.

Methala near Thiruvanchikulam: Kīlataḷi Śiva temple

(Pls. XV and XVI; figs. 7 and 27)

There are a number of early temples of the Chēras around the capital Mahōdayapuram or Thiruvanchikulam. Within a kilometre to the west of the Śiva temple at Thiruvanchikulam is located the Kīlataḷi Śiva temple, now in ruins. The Kṛishṇa temple, described above, is within half a kilometre of this temple, and both the temples facing the east, are built fully of laterite blocks. Originally the Kīlataḷi Śiva temple must have been a large complex occupying a wide area. A number of loose sculptures of *Mātrikās* have been recovered from the site, some of them being housed in the Trichur Museum.

It is, again, a *sāndhāra*-temple but it is not known if it was of the *sarvatōbhadrā* type. Unfortunately its outer walls (*bāhya-bhitti*), but for the *adhishṭhāna*, have fallen down but the rebuilt inner walls stand in the middle like a cubical tower—its top part rising above the *āditāla* to form the *grīvā* or the second *tala*. On plan, it comprises a square *garbha-griha* with a narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the latter having three flights of steps on the three sides. The *mukha-maṇḍapa* had, therefore, four functional doors but it is difficult to ascertain whether the sanctum likewise had four openings.

The *adhishṭhāna* courses of the *garbha-griha* and *mukha-maṇḍapa* are continuous and also similar in type. However, it is straight for the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, while the *garbha-griha* has the *adhishṭhāna* showing recesses and projections. It is then certain that the *bāhya-bhitti* was divided originally into *karṇas* and *bhadrās*. To return to the *adhishṭhāna*, it consists of *upāna*, a tall *jagatī*, a *vṛitta-kumuda*, which is made of two courses of moulded laterite, followed by a *kaṇṭha*, a *kampa*, thin *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā* in succession. From a few vestiges here and there it may be seen that the wall above the *adhishṭhāna* must have been a fairly thick double wall with a narrow core of mortar or crushed brick or laterite. The *āntara-bhitti* of the *garbha-griha* proper appears to have a *mañchaka* type of *adhishṭhānā*, the course of which has been relieved by rail-pattern.

¹Travancore Archaeological Series, VI, p. 193; and *Annual Report of Epigraphy 1895*, no. 226.

²Travancore Archaeological Series, VI, pp. 192-93; and *Annual Report on Epigraphy 1895*, no. 227.

THIRUVANCHIKULAM: KĪĻATALI ŚIVA TEMPLE
DISTRICT TRICHUR

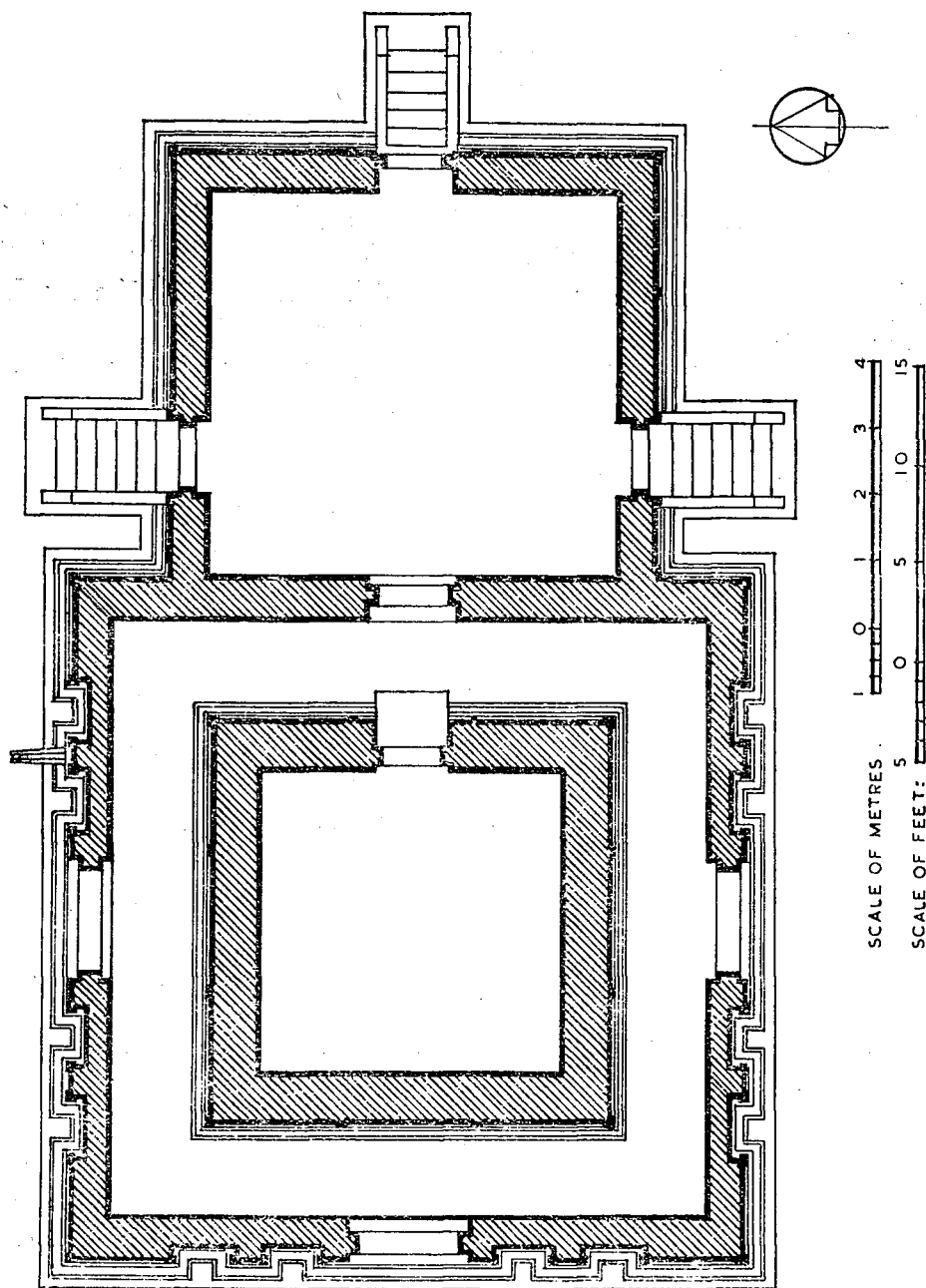


FIG. 27

Here both the sanctum and the *mukha-maṇḍapa* have *praṇāla*, of granite, on the northern side. The one connected with the *garbha-griha* is of the faceted type, with an open channel, and lipped end, vaguely resembling the *gō-mukha*. A rectangular cistern is placed below it for collecting lustral water. The *praṇāla* rests over the *kumuda* and hence, comes out of the *kaṇṭha* part of the *adhishṭhāna*. On the other hand, the one belonging to the *mukha-maṇḍapa* is of a straight variety and it has been set above the *paṭṭikā*.

All the extant flights of steps have *hasti-hasta* banisters, carved with a standing lion, portrayed realistically. These banisters and the *sōpāna* proper are made of granite slabs.

It may be conjectured that the present elevation of the *garbha-griha* follows more or less the old form of the structure. In that case, the Kīlataḷi Śiva temple was intended to be a *dvitala-vimāna* with a square *grīvā* and pyramidal *śikhara*. The *āntara-bhitti* of the *āditāla* is marked by the presence of a very short *kapōta* with a *padma-valabhī* below. In all probability, the temple was not fronted by a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*.

To the proper right of the *sōpāna*, in front of the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, there are the figures of a large seated Gaṇapati, of dark grey granite, and three images of seated deities, with only the portions below the waist extant. Undeniably, these images belong to a group of *Sapta-mātrikās*. There are five *Sapta-mātrikā* images, in the Trichur Museum, which were possibly discovered from the Kīlataḷi temple. They are larger and earlier than the group now available at the site, and they belong to the ninth century (above, p. 105). Architecturally also the temple with its classical *sāndhāra* arrangement—an arrangement which became virtually out of date in the Middle phase—may be dated to the same period.

Tali: Śiva or Nityavichārēśvara temple

(Pls. XVII A, XVIII and LXXIII; figs. 7 and 12)

The Śiva temple at Tali, in Talapilli Taluk, District Trichur, may be taken as a fairly good example of a *dvitala-vimāna* of about the end of the ninth century. It is also a *sāndhāra-vimāna* and with it are associated a number of Chēra inscriptions. An epigraph dated in the seventeenth regnal year (A.D. 934) of Kōdai-Ravivarman refers the temple as Nityavichārēśvara and the village as Tali. The inscription registers a transaction by the residents and officers of the temple of Nityavichārēśvara at Tali regarding the distribution among temple-servants of 300 *kaḷam* of paddy received from the two villages—Ukkira-maṅgalam and [Mi]yānamaṅgalam. It is engraved on one of the eight inscribed slabs, all placed side by side at the same place, and they all refer to the temple of Nityavichārēśvara. These are possibly resolutions arrived at various deliberations held in this temple-premises. One of the inscriptions mentions a Kumāraṇ Iraivi of Maṇavāḍu as ruling the district. Further, it appears that Neḍumburaiyūr was a larger geographical unit within which Tali was located. In the Talapilli Taluk itself is to be seen a place called Nedumpura, famous for an apsidal Śiva temple (below p. 223). None of the inscriptions, after all, refer to the

foundation of the temple, which seems to have existed even before the earliest available epigraph. In the circumstances, it can easily be held that the temple was built before A.D. 900. The temple also contains some records of the time of the Chēra kings Kōvindhēśvaraṇ Kōdai (Indu- Kōdaivarmaṇ) and one Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ.¹

The Nityavichārēśvara temple, built entirely of laterite blocks, faces the east, and is square on plan. It consists of a *dvitala* principal shrine, two sub-shrines—one for Kṛishṇa and the other for Gaṇēśa—all being enclosed by a *nālambalam*. It has also a tall two-storeyed *gōpura*, on the east, and smaller one on the west. In fact, the Kṛishṇa shrine projects out of the western *gōpura* itself. The minor shrines are decidedly of late origin.

The main Śiva temple is a *sāndhāra* temple of the classical type consisting of a square *garbha-grīha*, with *pradakṣhiṇā-pātha* all round, and a pillared *mukha-maṇḍapa*, projecting out of the former. All the pillars are of wood, so also is the ceiling. The roof over the *mukha-maṇḍapa* serves as the *śuka-nāsa* coming out of the two-storeyed sanctum. A flight of eight steps leads to the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, and the granite *sōpāna* has also *hasi-hasta* banisters, carved with an arch enclosing a figure of Gaṇapati, and a *pūrṇa-kumbha* on one of the sides. Two *dvāra-pālas*, made out of granite, stand on either side of the entrance of the *mukha-maṇḍapa*; the images are later in date. It is worth-noting that the main shrine is without a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*.

Built on a high *adhishṭhāna*, the Nityavichārēśvara is an impressive structure. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kamṭa*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*; it is followed by a *vēdī* showing *pādas*. The *nāla*, held by *simha* in its mouth, rests on the *vṛitta-kumuda*, and it is of simple channelled type. In the wall-decorations, the Nityavichārēśvara differs considerably from the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirukkulasekharapuram. Thus in centre of each wall one finds *ghana-dvāras* instead of functional doors. Further, *śālā-pañjaras* in place of the *dēva-kōshṭhas* occur in the *hārāntaras* and are not prominently projected either. The *karṇas* display shallow niches, practically non-functional, instead of the *vṛitta-sphuṭita* of the Kṛishṇa temple. All the *kudya-stambhas* of the Tali temple have corbels of the bevelled variety with a median *paṭṭa*. Pilasters are tetragonal (*brahma-kānta*) below, followed by an octagonal (*vishṇu-kānta*) shaft. The *prastara*'s two conspicuous mouldings are *valabhī* (composed as if of series of beam-ends) and curved *kapōta* decorated with *nāsikās* enclosing human faces. Unlike the Kṛishṇa temple, it has the *hāra* above the *prastara*, and still above, the *grīvā-kōshṭhas*. Needless to say, it has a square *grīvā* and a pyramidal roof or *śikhara* crowned by a *stūpī*.

Panniyur: Lakshminārāyaṇa shrine in Ayyappaṇ temple-complex

(Pls. XVII B and C; fig. 28)

The Lakshminārāyaṇa shrine facing the east, in the vast Ayyappaṇ temple-complex at Panniyur, in Ottapalam Taluk, District Palghat, is very similar in appearance to the

¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, XXVIII, pp. 216-220. Also, *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy* 1921-22, nos. 341-348.

Kiḷataḷi Śiva temple described earlier. As its outer walls or *bāhya-bhittis* have fallen down, it is now represented by a cubical structure, made of laterite blocks. Evidently, it was a *sāndhāra-vimāna* of the traditional type, and on plan, consists of square *garbha-griha* and a narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa* fronted by a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. The last-mentioned unit is a new component in the layout and it is not certain whether it can be taken as coeval with the main shrine. Like the Kiḷataḷi Śiva temple, the *bāhya-bhitti* of the shrine was made of

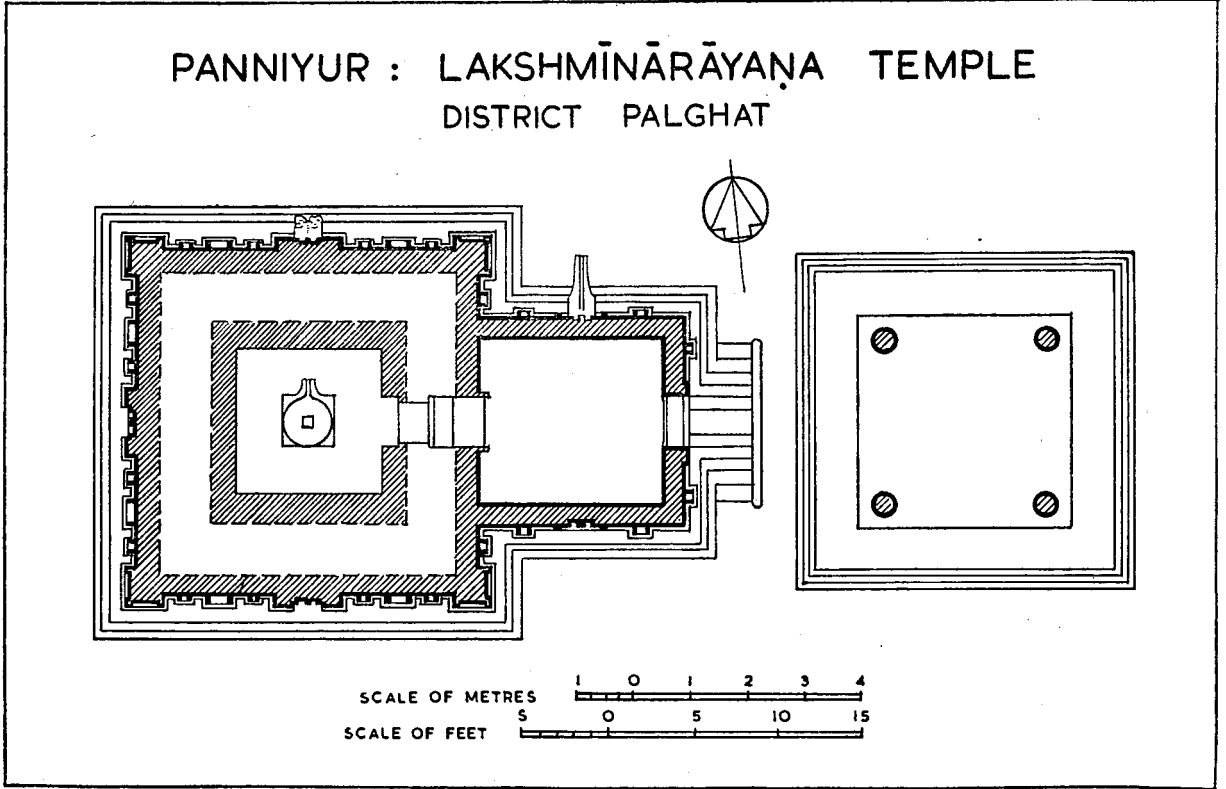


FIG. 28

double walls with a narrow core in the middle. But its *adhishṭhāna* is built of granite and the mouldings consist of *upāna*, tall *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. It has two *praṇālas*, one for the shrine and the other for the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. The simple faceted *nāla* of the *mukha-maṇḍapa* is intact, while the other one, now mutilated, rests on the squarish part of the *ṛitta-kumuda*; the *ambu-mārga* of the latter clearly shows three different levels—the lowest one being in the *upāna* level. Another interesting fact is that the projections and returns of the *bhitti* start from above the *ṛitta-kumuda*. The *āntara-bhittis* have four simple pilasters as the only decorative element. Four projecting courses of varying degrees in the centre of the tall structure mark the end of the *āditāla*. Above it rises the second storey. Inside, the *garbha-griha* is enshrined a standing image of Viṣṇu.

The Lakshminārāyaṇa shrine now forms part of a bigger complex covering a wide area. But it is not known why the complex goes by the name Śrī Ayyappaṇ temple,

for the one dedicated to Ayyappaṇ is an inconspicuous shrine, without a roof, situated to the south-eastern corner of the main complex. Here the most important temple is the shrine of Varāhamūrti, with three subsidiary shrines dedicated variously to Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa, Kundil-Varāha and Gaṇēśa. Other temples at this site include shrines for Śiva, Subrahmaṇya and Śāstā. Of these shrines only the Kundil-Varāhasvāmin is associated with an inscription dated to Kollam 669 (A.D. 1494).¹ The date of the Lakshmīnārāyaṇa shrine in the absence of any epigraphical evidence rests on its outward similarity with the Kīlataḷi Śiva temple. But the *adhishṭhāna* of the former appears to be later than the Kīlataḷi temple, and hence the Lakshmīnārāyaṇa temple may be dated to the latter half of the tenth century A.D.

D. CIRCULAR DRĀVIDA-KĒRAḤA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

Quite a number of circular temples were built under the patronage of the Chēra monarchs. But it seems that they were mostly *dvitala-vimānas*, each one having an impressive conical roof pinnacled by a solitary *stūpi*. Circular temples like the Bharata temple at Irinjalakuda and Śiva temple at Avattathur, both in Mukundapuram Taluk of District Trichur, belong undeniably to this phase, but because of later renovations it is difficult to trace any early vestiges. For example, the Bharata temple at Irinjalakuda has yielded an inscription of Sthāṇu-Ravivarmaṇ (844-885), a senior contemporary of Āditya-Chōḷa (871-907). Dated in his eleventh regnal year it refers to the temple-trustees and servants (above, p. 23). In one of the Talakkad stone-inscriptions, the place is mentioned as Irinñāḍākkūḍal;² moreover, its deity Kūḍal-Māṇikkasvāmin has its representations in the paintings of the Mattancheri palace. Its walls above the *adhishṭhāna* are of wood.

The Śiva temple at Avattathur—Avattiputtūr of the inscription (above, p. 24)—has likewise revealed at least four inscriptions dated to the twentieth regnal year of Kō-Kōdai-Ravi. One of the epigraphs states that 'the thousand', 'the twenty-seven' and the *poduvāl* of the two *kuḍis* of Avattiputtūr being present, made a settlement whereby provision was made for offerings to the local temple Peruntirukkōyil. The donor appears to have been a Chēra queen Seramāṇ-Mādēvī, who gave lands in a village which was made a *kīḷiḍu* of Avattiputtūr and assigned its *rakshā-bhīga* to the temple. In the light of this evidence, none can doubt the antiquity of the site though this large circular shrine may have been raised in the next phase. Since then it must have passed through several stages of renovation, the last of which took place in A.D. 1906.

On the basis of the inscriptional evidence, some more temple-sites like the Vāmana-Mahāvishṇu temple at Tirkakara (above, p. 26), District Ernakulam, yielding among others, an inscription of Indu-Kōdaivarmaṇ (944-962), the Kṛishṇa temple at Tirkodittanam

¹ *Annual Report on Epigraphy for 1895*, nos. 214 and 216.

² *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1927*, no. 359.

POLPULLI : ŚIVA TEMPLE
DISTRICT PALGHAT

SCALE OF METRES : 1 0 1
SCALE OF FEET : 2 0 2 4 6

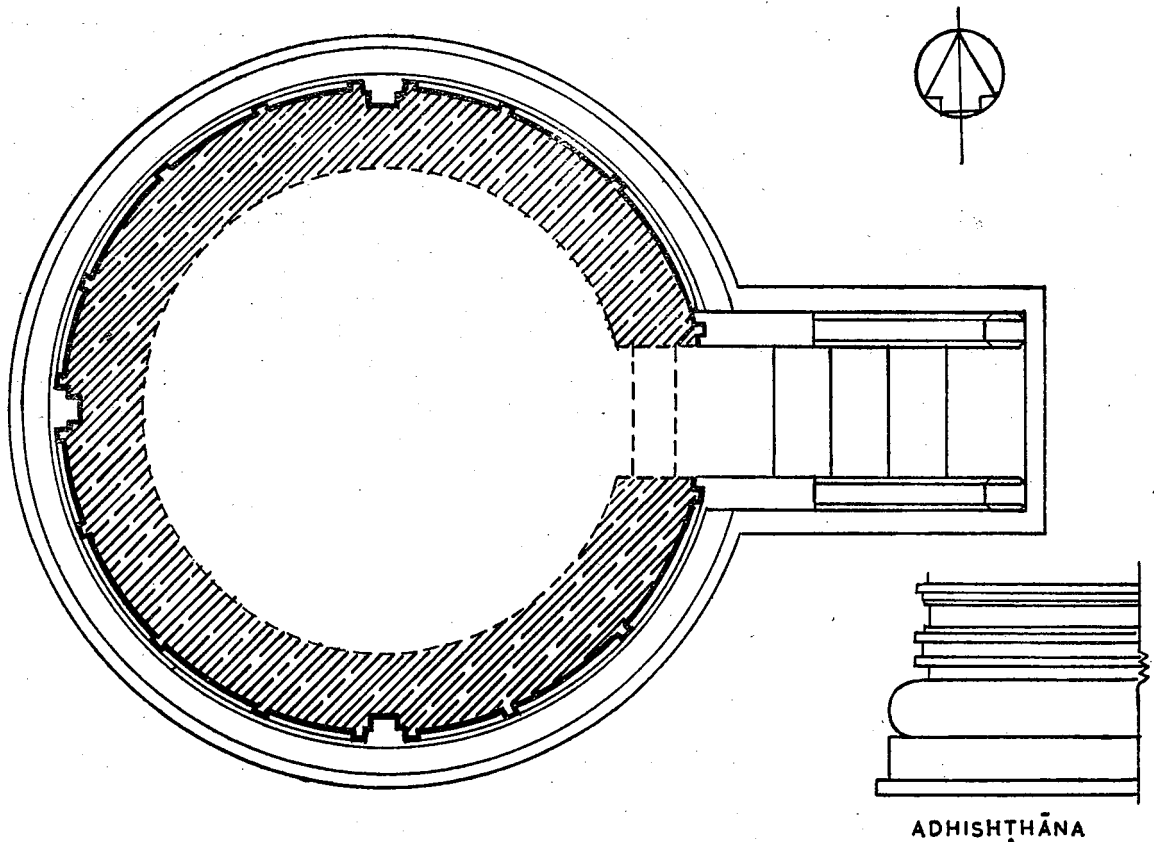


FIG. 29

(above, p. 26), District Kottayam, associated with inscriptions of more than one Bhāskara Ravivarman and the Mahādēva temple at Kaviyur,¹ District Alleppey, may easily be attributed to this period. A brief description of some of the circular shrines of this period is given below even though there is no intact example of any kind, now available. One point that needs special emphasis is the preponderance of the *kapōta-bandha* type of *adhishṭhāna* for the circular shrines. Perhaps the curved mouldings of the *kapōta* of the *adhishṭhāna* and also of the *prastara* harmonize well with the conical roof, having a bevelled edge. This is true, as will be shown later, with the early *adhishṭhānas* of the apsidal shrines.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Polpulli: ruined Śiva temple

(Figs. 7 and 29)

The ruined Śiva temple at Polpulli, in Palghat Taluk, of District Palghat, is represented only by its base, built of granite, but it is not of the *kapōta-bandha* type. Facing the east, it is an example of *nirandhāra* temple, perhaps without a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. It has a *sōpāna* on the east, with its banisters carved with the figures of lion. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampa*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā* followed by an undecorated *vēdī*. Bases of the *pañjara-kōshṭhas* and *kuḍya-stambhas* rest on the *kumuda*; in fact, projections and returns of the wall begin from above the *ṛitta-kumuda*. Traces of a square minor shrine to the north, having entrance from the east are also extant.

Among the ruins of this temple is to be seen an inscribed slab bearing a Sanskrit inscription, written in the Nāgarī characters.² It records a donation by one Sēdaṇ Kūrṇaṇ of fifty *kalaṅju* of gold for burning a perpetual lamp and for offering cooked food to the god Kōlapallidēvar. Palaeographically, the inscription may be ascribed to the middle of the ninth century.

Kaviyur: Śiva temple

(Pls. LVII and LVIII; figs. 7, 15, and 30)

Kaviyur in Tiruvalla Taluk, District Alleppey, is famous for its rock-cut shrine. About a kilometre to the west of the latter stands the circular Śiva temple, built of timber, on a granite *adhishṭhāna*. Facing the east, the temple, despite several alterations, is survived by its old *adhishṭhāna*, which alone can be placed in the Early phase. That the temple must have come into being in the middle of the tenth century is evident from the two inscriptions

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, V, pp. 1-7.

² *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1958-59*, no. 283. Here the inscription has been dated to the tenth century. But a closer look at the palaeography of the record will show that the inscription belongs to a date earlier than the tenth century.

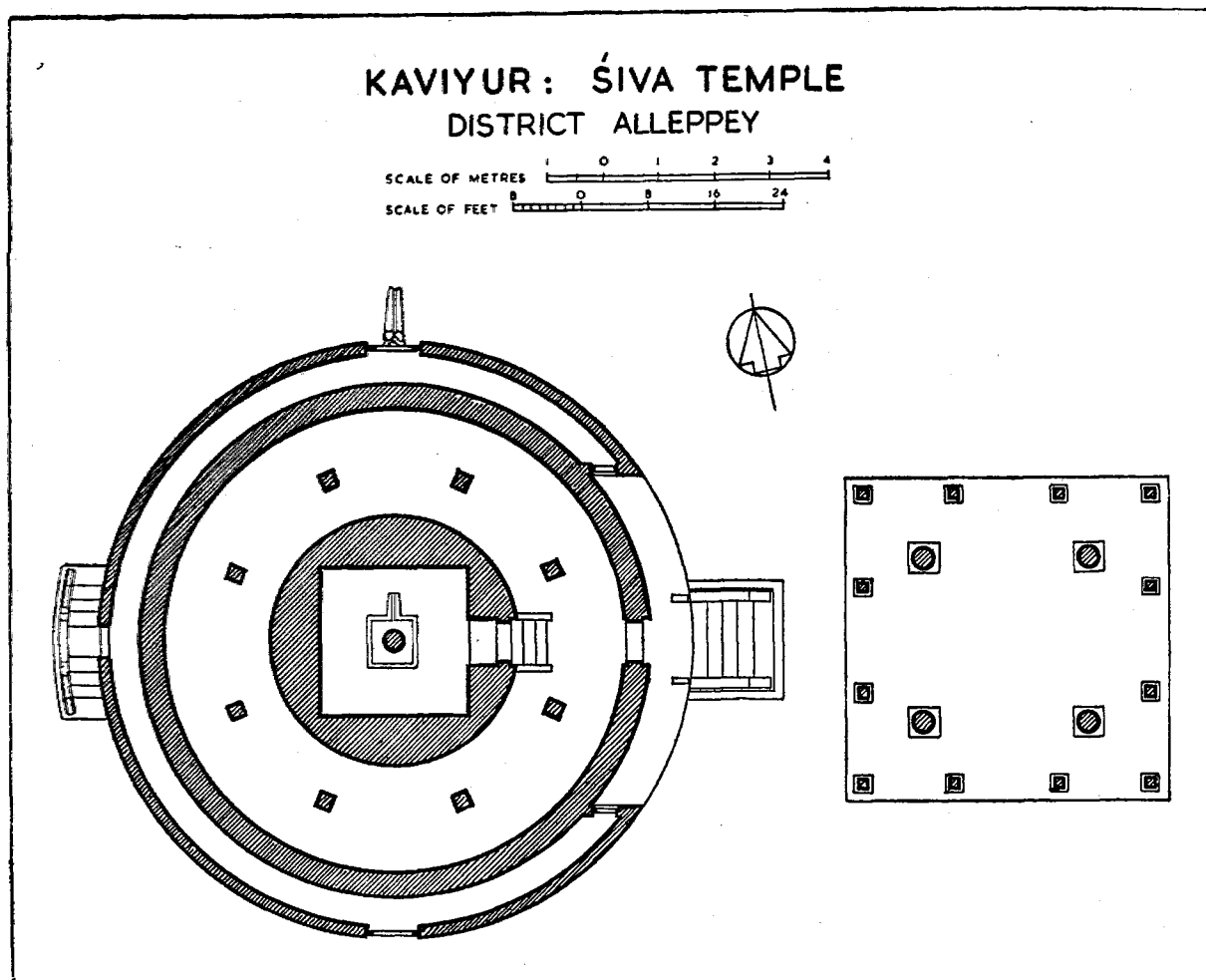


FIG. 30

on the *adhishṭhāna*. These are engraved on the *kumuda* and the *kapōta*, and both give the date in the Kali era: 4051 (A.D. 950) and 4052 (A.D. 951). Evident as it is, the *adhishṭhāna* belonged to the middle of the tenth century, if not of an earlier date. Its mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, deeply recessed *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* in between the *kampas*, *uttara*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*.

The temple, as it now stands, is a circular *vimāna* enclosing a square *garbha-griha* in the centre; the latter is surrounded by double *pradakṣiṇā-pathas*. Thus the shrine-interior must have undergone thorough change. The circular outer wall, however, has four openings like the *sarvatōbhadrā* type of temple, but the timber-built wall may be only a couple of centuries old. To sum up, it was at the beginning a circular temple of the *sarvatōbhadrā* type, and also provides a firm date for the *adhishṭhāna* type with *kapōta* as the top moulding. It may be mentioned here incidentally that Tirkodittanam temple has almost a similar *adhishṭhāna*, bearing an inscription of a Chēra ruler. However, there are many *kapōta-bandha* type of *adhishṭhānas* in the Middle phase bearing inscriptions assignable to the eleventh or the twelfth century (below, p. 200).

E. APSIDAL DRĀVIDA-KĒRAḶA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

The history of the apsidal *vimānas* of this phase is also confused largely because of the absence of any intact monument. Like the circular temples, one has to depend largely on the *adhishthāna* for the reconstruction of the architectural details of this group. The beginnings of a few apsidal shrines like the Śiva temple at Tiruvannur, Calicut, District Kozhikode, the Kālasamhāramūrti temple, Triprangod, the Śiva temple at Trikkandiyur and the Ayyappaṇ shrine in the Karikkaḍ-kshētram at Manjeri, all in District Malappuram, may be ascribed to this phase. These apsidal shrines, situated close to each other, form a group by themselves, and it is not unlikely that they owed their popularity to some particular line of rulers, who favoured apsidal temples, with *gaja-prishthākāra* superstructure. To some extent this trend might have been inspired by apsidal shrines, of the Ālupa country, which date back, as stated earlier (p. 61), to the first quarter of the eighth century A.D.

The region in which these apsidal temples are located falls within the limit of ancient Vaḷḷuvanāḍ, founded by one Rājaśēkhara in the tenth century. It must be a ruling family under the overlordship of the Chēras. Nevertheless, Rājaśēkhara's son Vaḷabha was a close friend of the Chōḷa king Rājāditya who was defeated and killed by the Rāshtrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa III in the battle of Takkolam (A.D. 949). Vaḷabha renounced the world and became eventually the head of the Tīruvattiṃyūr-*maṭha* with the name of Chaturānana-Paṇḍita because he failed to fight by the side of his friend and die along with him in the battle-field. It is significant to note that the Ādhipurīśvara temple at Tiruvattiyur, of the time of Rājēndra Chōḷa, is also an apsidal structure, possibly built on an earlier temple-plan of the same type. All this may show that the growth of apsidal shrines in the west and east coasts may be the result of some common religious fervour emanating from some organized religious movement. The Kālamukha sect had its centre at Tiruvattiyur but it is not known whether its influence reached as far as the ancient Vaḷḷuvanāḍ.

As stated above, there is no intact apsidal shrine that may be ascribed to this phase. But the broad *nirandhāra* plan and certain architectural features of this phase can be studied from the following structures, the brief descriptions of which are given below.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Manjeri: Ayyappaṇ shrine in Karikkaḍ-kshētram

(Figs. 7 and 31)

The Ayyappaṇ shrine, facing the west, in the Karikkaḍ-kshētram, in Manjeri Taluk, of District Malappuram is a *nirandhāra* temple, which is apsidal externally but oblong internally. Its interior is divided into rectangular sanctum and a smaller *mukha-maṇḍapa*. This division cannot, however, be seen on the exterior plan. Further, no returns

or projections are provided in the *adhishṭhāna*, the mouldings of which consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vr̥tta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils in between the *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*.

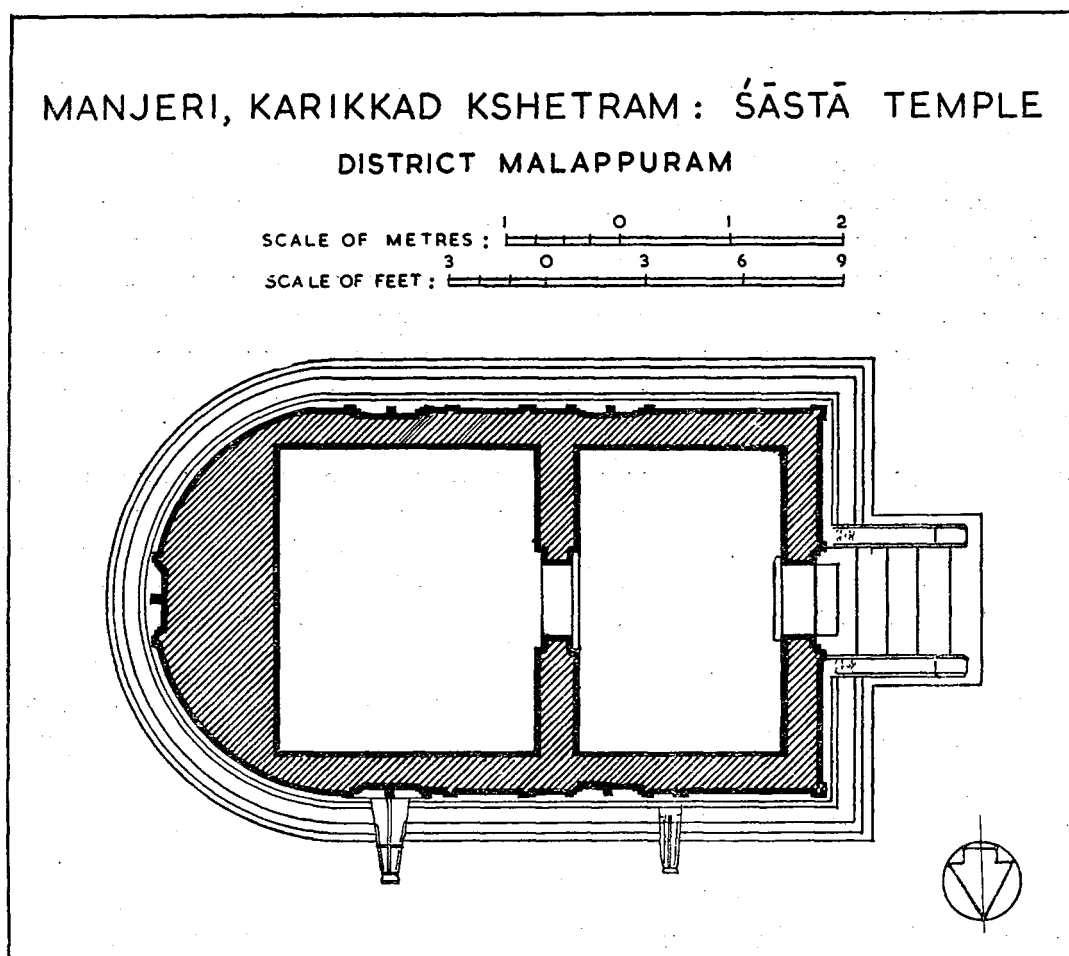


FIG. 31

The ground-plan of the Ayyappaṇ shrine is rather unique in Kerala and its nearest prototype is the Agastyēśvara temple at Chilamakuru, District Cuddapah, Andhra Pradesh. Combination of apsidal plan with the oblong one is itself a rare phenomenon and is also, by and large, an indication of early date. Considering this, the date of the Ayyappaṇ shrine may be placed at least to the early years of the tenth century. An inscribed slab in the floor of the Ayyappaṇ shrine may be dated to the eleventh century on palaeographical grounds. It mentions an endowment for the Vedic studies and also records some provision for sandal and other items. Another fragmentary epigraph makes a mention of a *tirukkōyil*.¹

¹Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1959-60, nos. 234-36.

Apart from the Ayyappaṇ shrine, there is a twelfth-century circular shrine, dedicated to Subrahmaṇya, (below, p. 200) within the same temple-complex.

Triprangod: Kālasamhāramūrti temple

(Pl. XIX B; figs. 8 and 32)

The Kālasamhāramūrti temple at Triprangod Amsam, in Tirur Taluk, of District Malappuram, is a temple-complex having nine subsidiary shrines. The principal shrine, facing the west, is a two-storeyed *vimāna* raised on a granite *upapīṭha*. We are concerned here primarily with this *upapīṭha*, which constitutes the only surviving element of the Early phase. Its mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. The front part has a central *bhadra* projection; otherwise the *upapīṭha*, or in other words the earlier *adhishṭhāna*, runs in a straight alignment. A cursory glance of the *adhishṭhāna* and the *upapīṭha* will show that no individual moulding of the one can be compared with that of the other. Further, the projection of the *kumuda* of the *upapīṭha* is by no means conspicuous compared to that of the *adhishṭhāna*. In the circumstances, the present *upapīṭha* has to be taken as the remnant of an earlier structure, now completely lost.

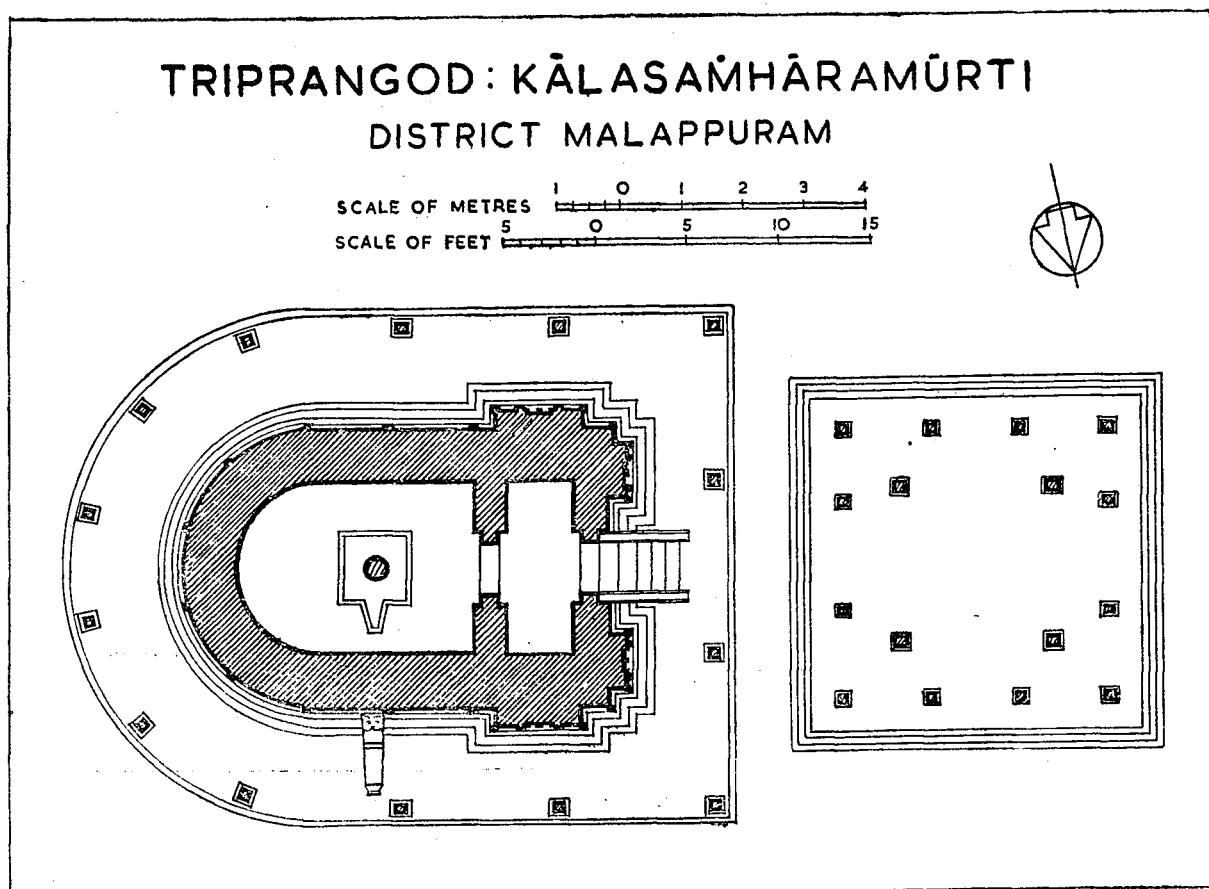


FIG. 32

That the temple had an early beginning may be affirmed from the discovery of an inscription of the Chēra monarch Kōdai-Ravivarman (917-944).¹ It records some gift of land to the temple and not its construction. It will, therefore, not be far from truth if the beginning of the complex is dated to the first quarter of the ninth century. There seems to have some uniformity in the dimensions of the apsidal shrines ascribed here to the Early phase. It may be seen from Table III that all the four temples range in length from 7·04 m to 8·84 m while the width varies from 4·39 m to 6·02 m. No other group of apsidal shrines conforms to this dimension. It is worth-noting that all the temples, except the Śiva temple at Trikkandiyur, face the west.

Trikkandiyur: Śiva temple

(Pl. XXI B; figs. 8, 15 and 33)

The Śiva temple at Trikkandiyur, in Tirur Taluk, District Malappuram is also a *dvaitala-vimāna* built on an earlier granite base, now used as its *upapīṭha*. Like the temple

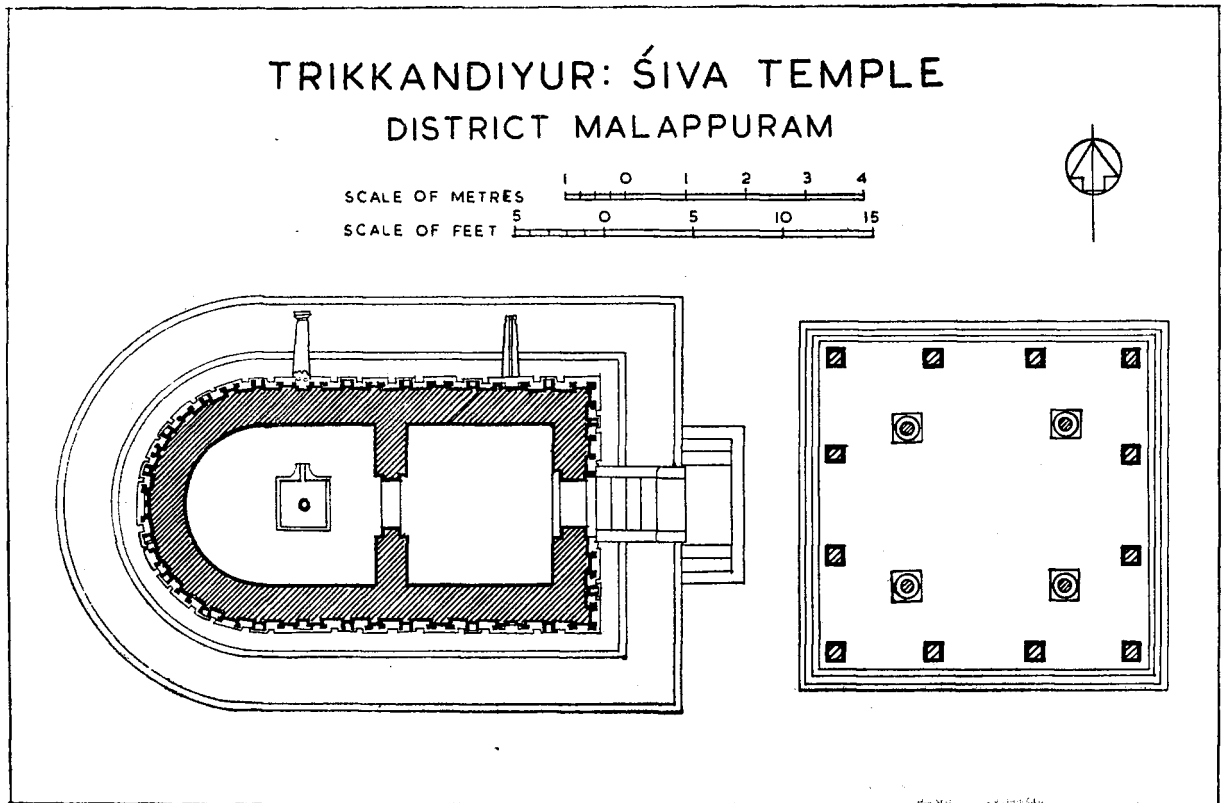


FIG. 33

¹ *Annual Report on Epigraphy for 1895*, no. 219. The inscription is not *in situ*, for it was removed to the Collector's House at Calicut.

TIRUVANNUR : ŚIVA TEMPLE
DISTRICT KOZHIKODE

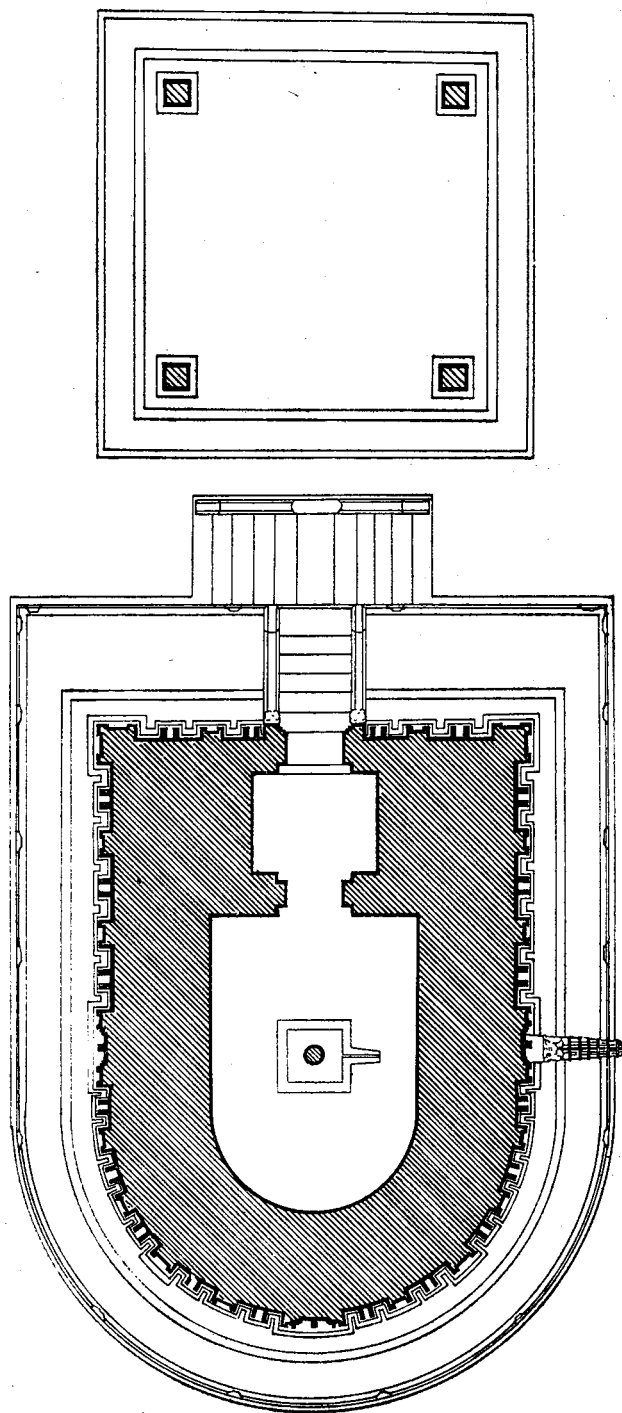
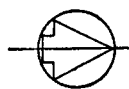
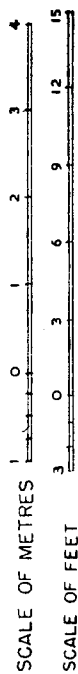


FIG. 34

of Kālasamhāramūrti at Triprangod, it too, has a few sub-shrines. Stylistically, the *upapīṭha* is similar to that of the Triprangod temple in that its *kumuda* projects out as much as the topmost course of the *adhishṭhāna*. In the present temple, *adhishṭhāna* mouldings above the *kumuda* are highly recessed. The earlier *adhishṭhāna* or the present *upapīṭha* is of the *kapōta-bandha* type; mouldings comprise *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas*, *uttara*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*. Over the earlier base, rises the present apsidal shrine leaving a walk of about 0.91 m all round. The temple is not associated with any datable record but because of its similarity with the other apsidal shrines of the region it may also be dated to the early years of the ninth century.

Tiruvannur: Śiva temple

(Pl. XXI A; figs. 8 and 34)

The Śiva temple at Tiruvannur, in Panniyankara Amsam, near Calicut, in Kozhikode Taluk of District Kozhikode, is built on an apsidal plan. Facing the west, the temple doubtless has two major phases of construction, as represented by two *adhishṭhānas* and two *sōpānas*. The earlier *adhishṭhāna* serves now as the *upapīṭha* and its mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas*, *uttara*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*. At the time of the first *adhishṭhāna*, the *sōpāna* had two lateral flights of steps meeting at a common landing, screened by the *hasti-hasta* banisters, each carved with *pūrṇa-kumbha* etc.

Because of its similarity with the two above-mentioned temples, the Tiruvannur temple may also be dated to the early ninth century. The god of Tiruvannur is referred to in an inscription from the place and it registers a gift of lamp donated during the rule of one Rāma,¹ who may be identified with Kō-Śrīvaṣarāma of Indyanur (p. 31).

4. TEMPLES IN MŪSHIKA COUNTRY

A. INTRODUCTION

The Mūshikas of north Malabar, with their capital at Kolam, may have been ruling at least during this phase under the overlordship of the Chēras. Mention has already been made about the patronage that they extended to temple-building within their territory. Most of the temples that they built were square on plan, circular temples there constituting a negligible number. But it is doubtful if any apsidal temple was built by them in spite of the popularity of this architectural form in the neighbouring Ālupa country. Nor it is easy to establish whether the Mūshikas gave birth to any characteristic idiom distinct from that of the Chēras. Both the Chēras and the Mūshikas built *sāndhāra* temples, which in the latter area are mostly without a projecting *mukha-maṇḍapa*. Even the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*

¹Annual Report on Epigraphy for 1895, no. 220. In the epigraph, which was removed to the Collector's house at Calicut, the place is mentioned as Tirumaṇṇūr.

was absent in many cases. Only one distinguishing feature is the predominance of sanctum walls with recesses and projections in the Chēra country and its relative paucity in the Mūshika area. This is generally true of the *sama-chaturāśra-vimāna*, since the circular and apsidal temples of Kerala are generally without the *hārāntara*-recesses. Moreover, *dēva-kōshṭha* never occurs in the Mūshika country either in its functional or imitative form.

B. SQUARE DRĀVIDA-KĒRAḶA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

Of the square *vimānas*, only two have yielded inscriptions belonging to the Mūshika line of rulers: the Chālappuṟattu-ambalam at Eramam and the Karuvakkavu temple at Kannapuram, District Cannanore. Most probably these are *ekatala-vimānas* of quite modest proportions. On circumstantial evidence, at least two *dvitala-vimānas* may also be assigned to the Mūshikas; and quite naturally, many of their older features have become indistinct in the passage of time.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Eramam: Chālappurattu-ambalam

(Pl. XXIV; figs. 7, 15 and 35)

The Chālappuṟattu-ambalam, in Eramam Desam and Eramam Amsam of Taliparamba Taluk, District Cannanore, is now in complete ruins. Yet it must be considered as the most important site of north Malabar by dint of its association with the inscription of the Mūshika king Kaṇḍaṇ Kārivarman *alias* Rāmakūḍa-Mūvar-Tiruvadi ascribable on palaeographical grounds, to the eleventh century. Dated in the regnal year 58+1st, it is written in the Vaṭṭeḷuttu characters and records an agreement (*samaya-saṅkēta*) entered into the premises of Chalapuram temple among the Vaḷaṇṇiyur Nānādēyar and the servants (*paṇimakkal*) about the remuneration to a temple servant. It also refers to Kadappapaḷḷi and Rājēndra-śōḷā-samaiya-sēnāpati.¹ Thus without any doubt the inscription presupposes the existence of the temple. It is further confirmed by the occurrence of a mutilated image of Viṣṇu from the very temple-site: both the image and the inscribed slab are now lying there. The standing four-armed image of Viṣṇu may definitely be attributed a date of early tenth century. Undoubtedly, Eramam, at present a remote village, was an important place under the rule of the Mūshikas; even the place-name Eramam preserves a memory of the Mūshika epithet *Irāmaguḍamūvar*.

A closer examination of the ruins here, overgrown with rank vegetation, shows that the temple was built exclusively of laterite blocks. The site today is represented by a plinth

¹Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1929-30, no. 523.

of 5 square metre and extant height of 72 cm, a well-preserved *balipīṭha*, a wing of the *nālabalam* and a well. Within the outer walls (*bāhya-bhittis*) runs the inner walls (*āntara-bhittis*) encompassing an area of 2.5 sq.m. Inside the inner square lies a stone pedestal, about 72 cm square, of some standing image, now represented by two feet. The mutilated Viṣṇu image, now left near the laterite *balipīṭha*, was installed originally on the very pedestal. That the entrance was from the east is apparent from the remains of a laterite *sāpāna* with a *hasti-hasta* banister, the latter devoid of any ornamentation.

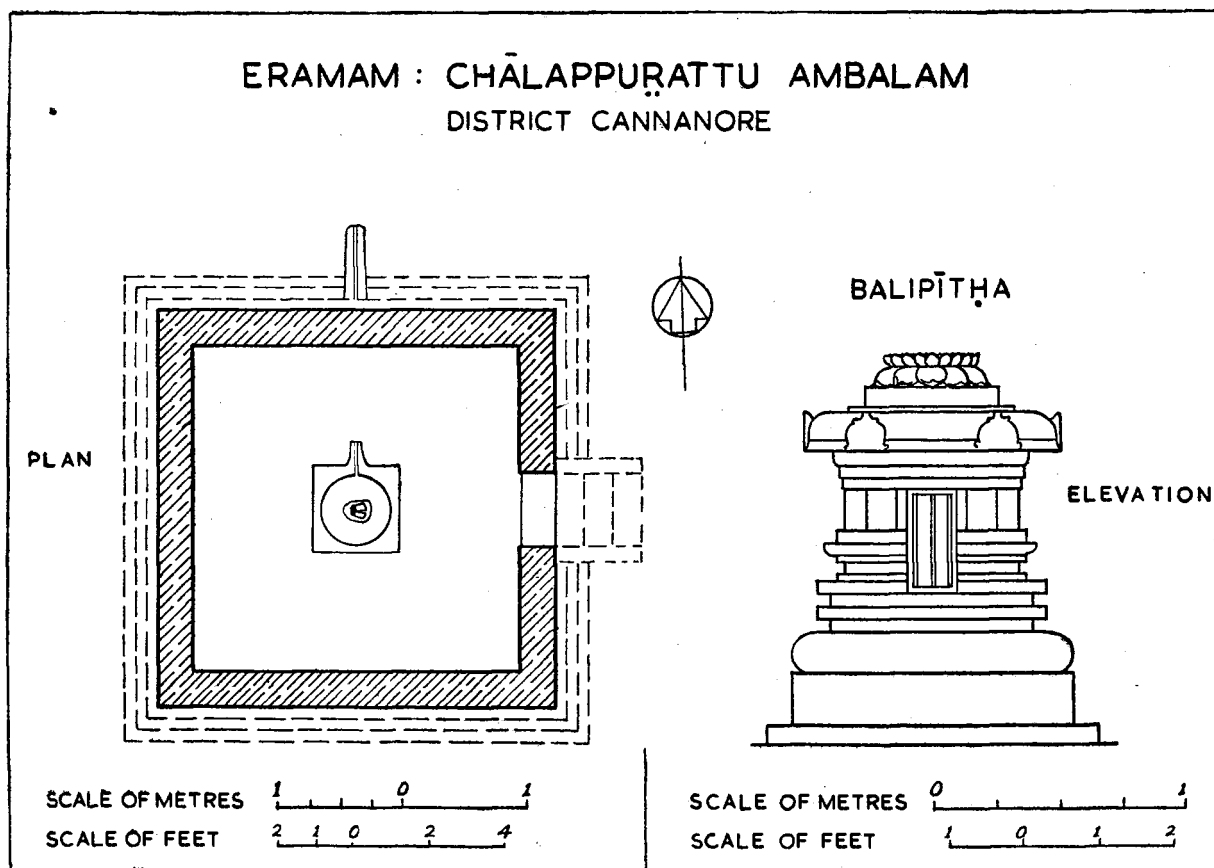


FIG. 35

It is clear from the above that it was a small *sāndhāra-vimāna*, without a projecting *mukha-maṇḍapa* and a detached *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. The *adhishṭhāna* still preserves the mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, a *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. Mouldings above the *kumuda* do not show any appreciable recessing. A channelled but faceted stone issuing out of the *kaṇṭha* was used as its *praṇāla*. Almost identical type of *praṇāla* comes from the Kannapuram temple and without any doubt, the type represents an early stage of development of the *ambu-mārga* for letting out the lustral water.

Kannapuram: Kuruvakkāva temple

(Figs. 7, 15 and 36)

The Kuruvakkāva temple at Kannapuram, in Cannanore Taluk, District Cannanore, is a small *sāndhāra*-temple, built of laterite. It is a square *ēkatala-vimāna*, facing the east, with a small *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front. However, the temple is without the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. A flight of four steps flanked by *hasti-hasta* banisters, all being made of granite, takes one to the *garbha-griha*, graced by two images identified popularly as Lava and Kuśa. All round the *garbha-griha* runs the *pradakshiṇā-patha*. The *adhishṭhāna* is made of laterite and its mouldings comprise *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. A long *praṇāla*, made of granite, comes out of the *kaṇṭha*; it has no well-defined *siṃha-mukha* to hold the faceted shaft in its mouth but has prominent channel and a lipped *gō-mukha*. In many respects it is similar on plan to the Chālappuṣattu-ambalam at Eramam. In the circumstances, it may also be dated to the tenth century.

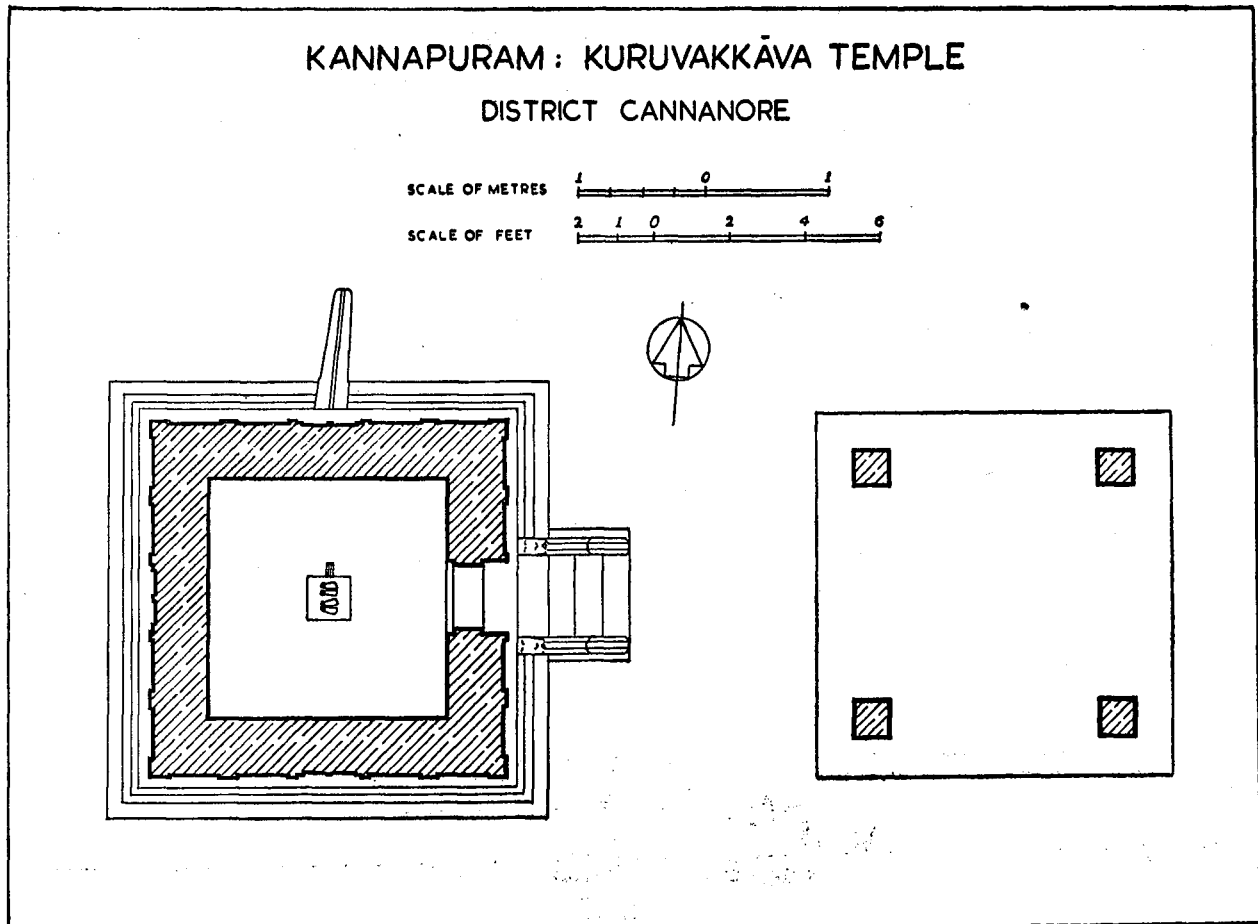


FIG. 36

It is undeniably a Mūshika temple as the inscription from the temple refers to some gift of land for offerings and the burning of lamp in the temple of Tirukkaṇṇapurattu-dēvar. Thus, originally it was a Kṛishṇa-temple. The inscription also mentions a Mūshika ruler Udayavaṇmar *alias* Rāmakuḍa-mūvar.¹

Tricchambaram: Rājarājēśvara temple

(Pl. XXII B; figs. 7 and 37)

Tricchambaram at Taliparamba, in Taliparamba Taluk of District Cannanore must have once formed part of the dominion of the Mūshika kings. It has been identified

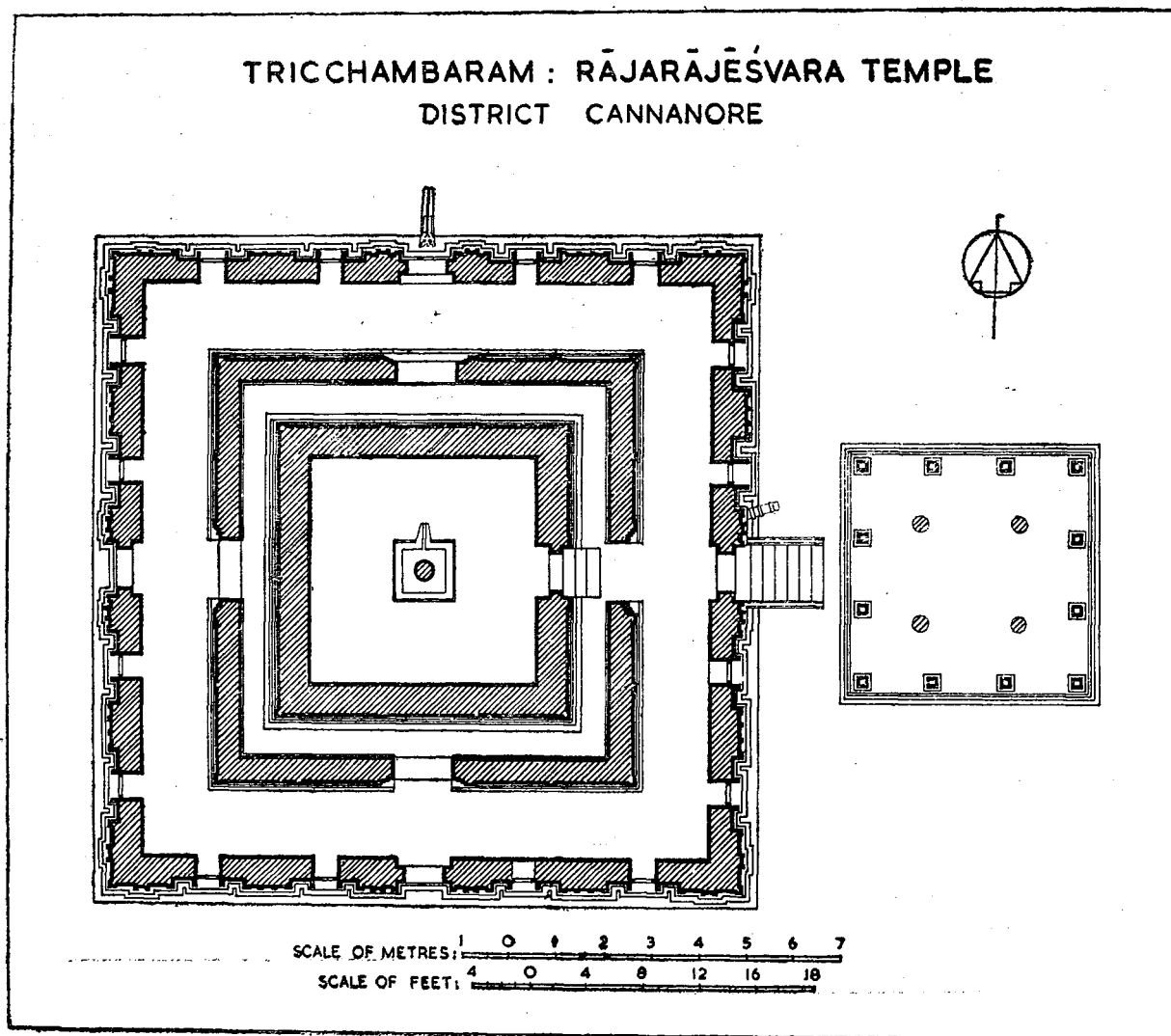


FIG. 37

¹ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1926*, no. 476.

with Sambarapura, the suburb of Cheluru of the *Mūshika-vamśam*. According to the description of the epic, Valabha, who is said to have succeeded his younger brother Jayamani, offered obeisance to the deities in the Śiva and Viṣṇu temples which may be identified with the present Rājārājēśvara and Kṛishṇa temples of the place.

The Rājārājēśvara temple is a large temple-complex with *gōpurās* and three massive *prākāras*. In some period of its history it was possibly enlarged into a structural complex with *pañcha-prākāras*. But this enlargement may have taken place some time in the sixteenth century when the tank inside the temple-precinct was excavated. One of the two inscriptions from the temple refers to the completion of a tank in Kollam 700 (A.D. 1524). It is written in Sanskrit verse, in Malayalam, and contains a reflection on the necessity for performing good deeds in this life. The other record mentions the construction of a platform in Kollam 954.¹

It is a temple-complex made of laterite but the *balipīṭha*, a very imposing structure, is made of granite. The emphasis on *balipīṭha* and the latter's transformation into an architectural entity seem to have taken place during the ascendancy of the Imperial Chōḷas. It is quite likely that a major renovation might have been undertaken soon after the conquest by Rājendra Chōḷa, for the name Rājārājēśvara itself is reminiscent of the Chōḷa association of this temple-complex. Quite likely, the main shrine and the *nāḷambalam* had undergone major repairs in this phase. Apart from the main Śiva shrine in the centre there are two subsidiary shrines meant for the Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Rājārājēśvarī in the form of niches brought about by utilizing the space of the ambulatory and the openings in the outer walls. Now, here are also two ambulatories around the square sanctum—an architectural scheme common in the Middle phase. The middle walls have also four openings corresponding to the openings of the outermost walls. These changes in the interior may have been carried out in the eleventh century when the Mūshika prince Valabha ordered for its repairs at the request of the local Brāhmaṇas. Before this time, as the *Mūshika-vamśa* tells us, the temple was in a dilapidated state.

The temple, square on plan, during the Early phase consisted of a *dvitala sāndhāra*-shrine with four openings on all the four sides. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, a high *kaṇṭha*, with *gala-pādas* in between the *kampas*. These *gala-pādas* were designed to be the lowermost parts of the *kuḍya-stambhas* and *pañjara-kōshṭhas* but later remodelling has broken this harmony with the *pādas* of the *vedikā*. In conformity with the early tradition, the temple is without a *mukha-maṇḍapa*.²

Tricchambaram: Kṛishṇa temple

(Pl. XXV; fig. 38)

Compared to the Rājārājēśvara temple, the Kṛishṇa temple in the neighbourhood, preserves much of its pristine form though the stucco decorations seem highly deceptive.

¹ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1926*, nos. 472-73

² H. Sarkar, 'The Cālappurattu-ambalam at Eramam: a ruined temple of the Mushikas of the North Malabar,' *Journal of Kerala Studies*, I, pp. 173-75.

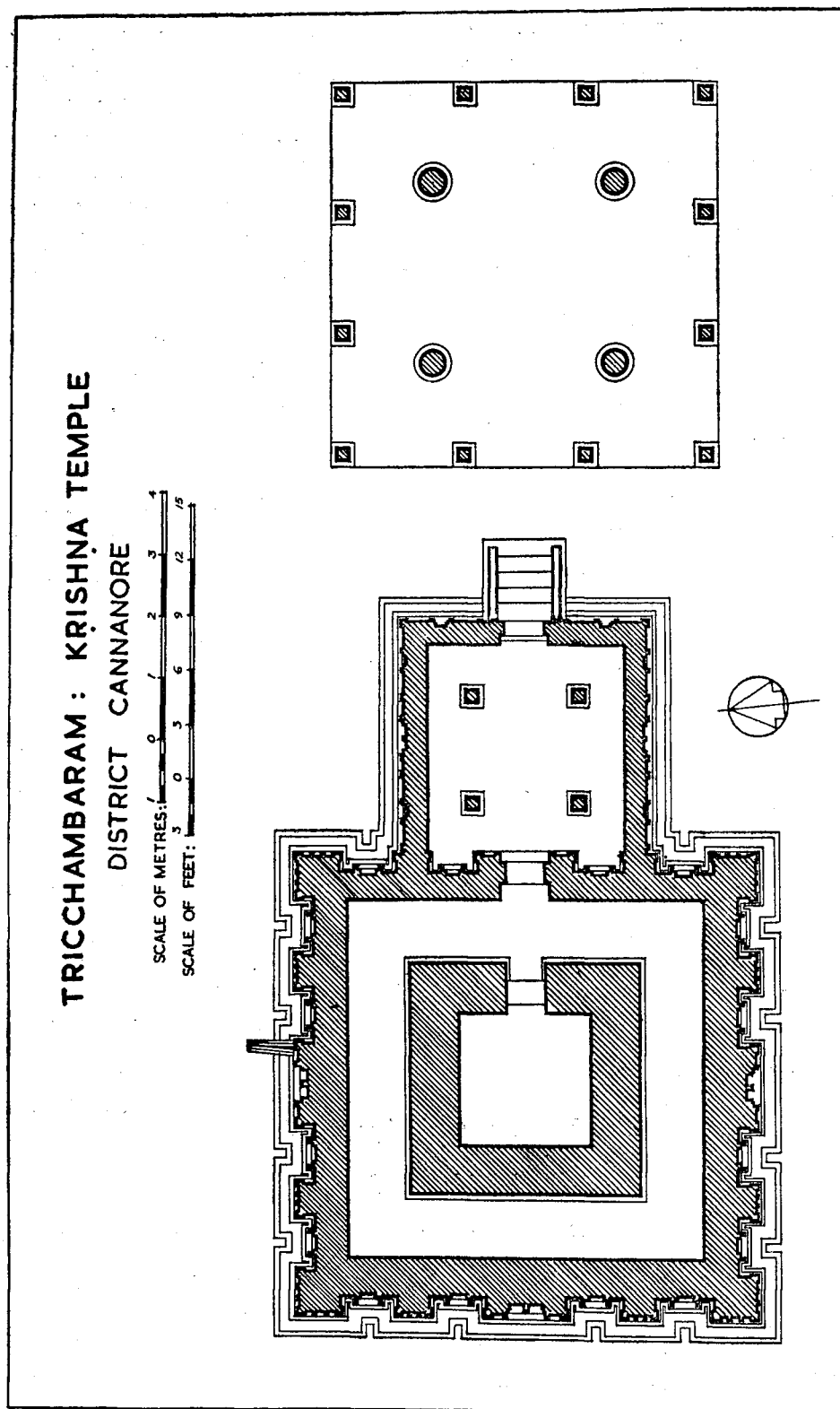


Fig. 38

It is a *dvitala sāndhāra-vimāna*, comprising the square *garbha-griha* and a later *mukha-maṇḍapa*; a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* stands in front of the temple.

The temple, but for the granite *adhishṭhāna*, is built of laterite blocks. At one stage all the walls were painted with murals traces of which are still to be seen. Significantly, the recesses and projections of the wall come down only to the *kumuda* level; for that matter, *kumuda* has the maximum projection, compared to that of the other mouldings, which consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, exceptionally short and flattish *vr̥tta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and the *paṭṭikā*. A channelled stone, evidently an early type of *praṇāla*, comes out of the *kaṇṭha*. Above the *adhishṭhāna* rises the *vēdikā*.

Walls are divided into five bays including the *ghana-dvāras* with *makara-tōraṇa* above, each projecting bay containing a *tōraṇa* with *sālā-sikhara*. The latter is enclosed on either side by *brahmakānta kuḍya-stambhas* carrying cross-corbels of the *taraṅga*-type with a median band. Grilled windows, again enclosed by *tōraṇas* with *sālā-sikhara*, are in the *hārāntaras*. Two mouldings representing *uttara* and *vājana* below the *bhūta-valabhī* run almost to the same height as that of the *pōtikā*. Interestingly, the *haṁsa-valabhī* never found favour in the Mūshika country despite its proximity to Tuḷunāḍu where, due to the influence of the Gaṅga tradition, the *haṁsa-valabhī* has the exclusive vogue. Over the *valabhī* of the Kṛishṇa temple, runs the *kapōta* decorated with *nāsikās* enclosing human face. The *ālīṅga* above the *kapōta* has a row of *vyālas*. Further, the *hāras* of the two *talas* are encircled by wooden bracket figures, undoubtedly a later embellishment.

Inside the sanctum is enshrined a standing image of Viṣṇu; a circumambulatory path runs round the *garbha-griha*. The narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa*, standing on four columns, appears to be a later addition as the exterior walls are devoid of any decorative element; even the *adhishṭhāna* mouldings are not identical. Above the *hāra* of the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, comes the copper roof which projects out like a *śuka-nāsā*.

Stylistically, the temple may be dated to the ninth century; perhaps it is, more or less, contemporaneous with the Rājārājēśvara temple close by. The Mūshika king Valabha possibly offered obeisance to this very temple, which was then more famous than the Śiva shrine mentioned earlier.

C. CIRCULAR DRĀVIḌA-KĒRAḌA SHRINE

(i) GENERAL

Rarely have we come across any circular shrine in District Cannanore or further beyond, in the Ālupa country. Quite likely, this type of ground-plan did not, for some reason or the other, find any favour with the Mūshikas of north Malabar. Yet, it is surprising that one of the earliest known temples from the area is circular on plan, and also presents several architectural peculiarities. One of the earliest sculptures from this area is from the same circular shrine, the Narayaṅkaṇṇūr temple, situated at Ramantali.

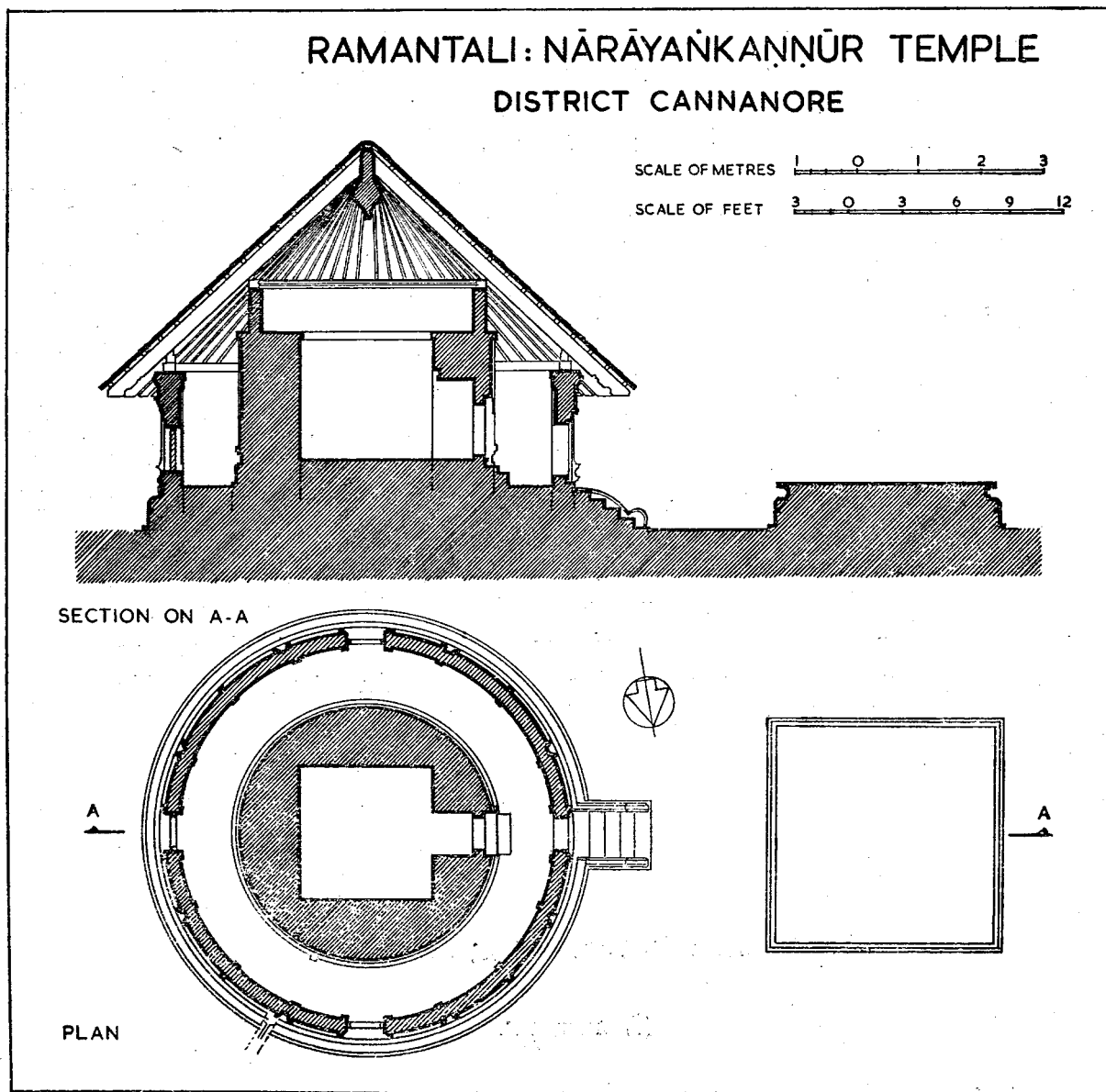


FIG. 39

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Ramantali: Narayaṅkaṇṇūr temple

(Pls. XXII A and XXIII; figs. 7, 17 and 39)

Ramantali, in Taliparamba Taluk, District Cannanore is a small island at the foot of the Mount D'Eli. The Narayaṅkaṇṇūr temple is also located in picturesque surroundings overlooking the sea on the one side and the Mount D'Eli on the other. Close to the temple-site, is to be seen some underground excavations in the red laterite deposit.

In the inscription, the god of the temple is called Narasiṅga-Viṇṇagar-Dēvar, thereby indicating its original Vaishṇava character. It is worth-noting that several Vaishṇava shrines received the patronage from the Mūshika kings. The two inscriptions that come from the temple-site do not, however, furnish any name of king or dynasty. But circumstantial evidence clearly suggests its location in the Mūshika country whose most important hill-feature was the *Mūshika-parvata* or Mount D'Eli. Before coming to the actual description of the temple let us examine the inscriptions, the earliest of which dates back to A.D. 928.¹ Of course, both the epigraphs are dated in the Kali era,² a usage quite commonly followed in Kerala.

The inscription which is dated to A.D. 928 refers the god as Narasiṅga-Viṇṇagar-Dēvar. Written in archaic Vaṭṭeluttu characters, it bears the date Kali 4029 expressed by the chronogram. The other Vaṭṭeluttu inscription is dated in Kali day 1523929, also expressed by the chronogram, gives the date A.D. 1132, when some images were consecrated in the temple. This inscription is engraved on the *kumuda* of the *adhishṭhāna*, while the other one is written on a slab planted near the shrine. The evidence of both these inscriptions shows that the temple was very much in use during the tenth to the twelfth century.

According to the older record, Muṇḍaṅ Korṇaḍai of Maṇattunai bought from Nambiyar Vikkrama-Rāma a field called Ayini in Kaviyalppuram and gifted it to the god Narasiṅga-Viṇṇagar-Dēvar for maintaining a perpetual lamp and for providing offerings. It is noteworthy that the trading corporation called *manigrāmattur* of Ilaṅgo ppaṭṭiṇam was in charge of the endowment. Thus the inscription presupposes the existence of the temple which might have come up some time before A.D. 928.

It is a circular shrine of only one storey and faces the west. Walls are made of laterite blocks, while the *adhishṭhāna*, *sōpāna* and the door-frame are of granite. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* having dentils in between the *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. Above the *adhishṭhāna*, runs the *vēdikā*, followed by the *bhitti*, now completely lime-plastered. It is a *sarvatōbhadrā* type of shrine in that it is pierced on each of the four cardinal directions by a doorway. Association of a flight of four steps marks the main entrance

¹Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy for 1926, nos. 474-75.

²The initial date of the era of Kali-yuga is B.C. 3102.

which is from the west; it is edged on either side by uncarved *hasti-hasta* banister. In conformity with the universal practice here, the friezes of the *phalakas* issue out of the *simha-mukha*.

Besides the doorways, the wall is relieved by simple *tōraṇas* with *makara*-arches and *brahmakānta kudyā-stambhas* rising from above the *vēdikā*. Unfortunately, the *gala-pādas* of the *vēdikā* do not conform to the alignments of these reliefs. The only prominent member of its *prastara* is the *kapōta*, its *valabhī* showing no decorative motif. Above the *prastara* comes the conical tiled roof, pinnacled by a *stūpī*.

The temple has an interesting ground-plan in that the *bāhya-bhitti* encloses the *āntara-bhitti*, which is circular outside but square internally. Naturally, the space between the two *bhittis* serves as the *pradakṣiṇā-patha*, and it is this that imparts the *sāndhāra* character to this circular shrine. It is evident from the section that the *āntara-bhitti* rises like a cubical tower and does not end in any *śikhara*. The *garbha-griha*, without an image, has its own *sōpāna*; it has also a mild projection in front. There exists an outlet to the north-eastern corner of the *garbha-griha*, and it must have been connected with the *nāla* through an underground drain. In front of the circular shrine is the laterite base of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* but it is not known if both the units are contemporaneous.

The temple has a small sub-shrine, square on plan. Built entirely of laterite, it is a *nirandhāra* temple enshrining a standing image of Bālakṛiṣṇa. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. Walls are devoid of any decorative features except the *ghana-dvāras*. Its banisters, like the *adhishṭhāna*, are also of laterite. The *praṇāla*, in the form of a channelled stone, is the only granite part of this small shrine; the *praṇāla* rests on the *kumuda* and appears to be of the early variety. All round the complex can be seen traces of laterite base of the *nālambalam*.

Inside the temple-complex is kept a loose sculpture of a seated figure of Śāstā. The unsheltered image may be dated stylistically to the eighth century and perhaps antedate any of the extant monuments there. It is of fine workmanship in hard granite. The broken sculpture of Bālakṛiṣṇa, also of granite, may be ascribed to the thirteenth century.

TABLE II
Circular temples in Kerala

S. no.	Locality	Name of temple	Diameter in		Remarks
1	2	3	feet 4	metre 5	6
<i>District Alleppey</i>					
1.	Kaviyur	Mahādēva temple	35·63'	10·86 m	square internally
<i>District Cannanore</i>					
2.	Ramantali	Narayaṅkaṇṇur temple	24·88'	7·58 m	square internally
<i>District Ernakulam</i>					
3.	Pazhur	Peruntirukkōyil	42·63'	12·99 m	square internally
4.	Tirkakara	Vāmana Mahā-Vishṇu temple	47·43'	14·45 m	square internally
5.	Udayamperur	Peruntirukkōyil	55·75'	16·99 m	
6.	Uliyannur	Mahādēva temple	37·75'	11·51 m	
<i>District Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu</i>					
7.	Tirunandikara	Nandiśvara temple	32·88'	10·02 m	
<i>District Idikki</i>					
8.	Idamalaiyanpogai	Ruined Śiva temple	23·04'	7·02 m	
<i>District Kottayam</i>					
9.	Ettumanur	Mahādēva temple	53·43'	16·28 m	square internally
10.	Perunnayil	Tirukkannapuram Vishṇu temple	25·54'	7·79 m	square internally
<i>District Kozhikode</i>					
11.	Koduvalli	Subrahmanya temple	24·38'	7·43 m	square internally
<i>District Malappuram</i>					
12.	Manjeri	Bhagavati temple or Kunnath-ambalam	24·79'	7·56 m	
13.	Perintalmanna	Śiva temple	20·54'	62·6 m	square internally
14.	Pulpatta	Śiva temple	38·00'	11·58 m	
<i>District Palghat</i>					
15.	Netirimangalam	Kṛishṇa temple	15·00'	4·57 m	square internally
16.	Palliyurkavu (Vadakkancheri)	Śiva temple	13·5'	4·11 m	square internally
17.	Perumkurussi	Śiva temple	11·83'	3·61 m	
18.	Polpulli	Śiva temple	13·04'	3·98 m	
19.	Tirunillai	Śiva temple	23·88'	7·28 m	
20.	Tiruvalattur	Irāṇḍumūrti Amman temple I	38·17'	11·63 m	square internally
21.	Tiruvalattur	Irāṇḍumūrti Amman temple II	9·71'	2·96 m	square internally
22.	Tiruvarai	Vishṇu temple	14·38'	4·38 m	square internally
<i>District Quilon</i>					
23.	Chittumala (Eastern Kallada)	Bhagavati temple	35·88'	10·93 m	square internally
24.	Punalur	Trikōtēśvara Mahādēva temple	21·00'	6·40 m	

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF TEMPLES OF KERALA

1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>District Trichur</i>					
25.	Avattathur	Śiva temple	48·00'	14·63 m	square internally
26.	Peruvanam	Iraṭṭayappan Śiva temple	47·00'	14·33 m	
27.	Trichur	Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa temple in the Vaḍakkunnātha temple-complex	24·17'	7·37 m	square internally
28.	Trichur	Vaḍakkunnātha	47·75'	14·55 m	square internally
29.	Tripayar	Rāma temple	49·5'	15·09 m	
30.	Venganellur	Tiruvembilappan temple	38·25'	11·66 m	square internally
<i>District Trivandrum</i>					
31.	Manambur	Subrahmanya temple	27·67'	8·43 m	
32.	Navaikulam	Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa temple	47·93'	14·61 m	square internally
33.	Nemam	Niramaṅkara temple	25·75'	7·85 m	square internally
34.	Parappankod	Vishṇu temple	22·08'	6·73 m	
35.	Perumpaladur	Vishṇu temple (Nāraṇathukavu)	11·25'	3·43 m	
36.	Tiruvallam	Mahādēva temple	19·04'	5·80 m	
37.	Tiruvallam	Paraśurāma temple	12·83'	3·91 m	
38.	Valaya-Udaya- dichchapuram	Valayaudayēśvaram temple	21·43'	6·53 m	square internally
39.	Valiasalai	Mahādēva temple	48·25'	14·71 m	
40.	Varkkalla	Janārdana temple	24·08'	7·34 m	square internally
41.	Vellallur	Śiva temple	26·96'	8·22 m	
42.	Vellanad	Subrahmanya temple	27·63'	8·42 m	

TABLE III

Apsidal temples in Kerala

S. no.	Locality	Name of temple	longer axis		shorter axis	
			feet	metre	feet	metre
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>District Cannanore</i>						
1.	Aduru	Mahalingēśvara temple	74·58'	22·73 m	45·43'	13·84 m
2.	Mangalapadi	Sadāśiva temple	46·75'	14·25 m	32·75'	9·98 m
3.	Payyannur	Subrahmaṇya temple	51·17'	15·60 m	38·5'	11·73 m
<i>District Ernakulam</i>						
4.	Chennamangalam	Kunnatali (Śiva) temple	9·67'	2·95 m	9·71'	2·96 m
<i>District Kottayam</i>						
5.	Kizhavellur	Vāmana temple	48·5'	14·78 m	32·5'	9·91 m
<i>District Kozhikode</i>						
6.	Tiruvannur	Śiva temple	26·25'	8·00 m	19·75'	6·02 m
<i>District Malappuram</i>						
7.	Karikkad	Śāstā temple	23·08'	7·04 m	14·43'	4·39 m
8.	Trikkandiyur	Śiva temple	29·00'	8·84 m	17·00'	5·18 m
9.	Trikkandiyur	Minor shrine	12·00'	3·66 m	8·00'	2·44 m
10.	Triprangod	Kālasamhāramūrti temple	26·75'	8·15 m	19·75'	6·02 m
11.	Triprangod	Śāstā temple	11·00'	3·35 m	7·25'	2·21 m
<i>District Trichur</i>						
12.	Nedumpura	Śiva temple	48·17'	14·68 m	33·38'	10·17 m
13.	Nettisheri	Śāstā temple				
14.	Panjal	Ayyappaṅkāvu temple	14·17'	4·32 m	9·93'	3·02 m
15.	Trichur	Śāstā temple	15·83'	4·83 m	11·33'	3·45 m

CHAPTER VI

MIDDLE PHASE

1. INTRODUCTION

From early times different regions of Kerala were bound by various cultural and social ties. As the time passed, these bonds became more closer, specially with the expansion of the Chēra power during the tenth century. In the absence of a firm political barrier, the architecture also lost whatever little regional identity it had. Soon the temple-architecture assumed, by and large, a unified pattern, governed more by scriptural prescriptions and Brāhmaṇical injunctions than by dynastic propensities.

At the same time, it was this phase which marked the beginning of a distinctive Kerala style, assimilating in its broad matrix several trends and architectural innovations. As pointed out earlier, Kerala's characteristic *sāndhāra-vimāna* is a harmonious blend of the Drāviḍa with the Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style. It is a development that may easily be acclaimed as Kerala's definite contribution to the history of south Indian architecture. No less significant is the spectacular growth of circular shrines and the architecture of apsidal temples in south India. Indeed no other region in Indian subcontinent, except Kerala, witnessed the evolution and climax of these two temple-types.

Undeniably, it was a period of great proliferation of temples, coupled with a new wave of restoration of older ones. It is not easy, therefore, to select representative types out of a vast array of surviving examples. A notable phenomenon of Kerala's architecture is the continuity of a temple-site, and sometimes even the temple-form, despite successive repairs and reconstruction. It makes the chronological assessment of architectural development all the more arduous.

The Middle phase extends over a period from c.A.D. 1001-1300. Both the terminal dates are rather tentative though coinciding roughly with the period of Chōḷa expansion in or military encounters with Kerala. Some semblance of political unity might have been forged to repulse the Chōḷa onslaught but with the cessation of hostilities, Kerala must have completely relapsed once again in the vortex of mutual rivalry, leading to balkanization. To some extent, south Kerala maintained political stability under the Vēnāḍu rulers who participated actively in temple-building.

The temple-architecture of the period shows marked influence of the Chōḷa tradition, specially in the domains of art and minor architectural motifs. Any contact, as is well-known, proves to be a two-way traffic, and the Chōḷas too adopted certain trends of Kerala's temple-architecture. For instance, the concept of *sarvatōbhadrā* temple, introduced in the

architectural scheme of the Great Temple at Thanjavur, seems to have been largely inspired by the contemporary examples of the west coast. The Chōḷa monarchs, specially Rājendra Chōḷa must have patronized the cause of Brāhmaṇism, and offered gifts and lands to various temples. His inscriptions, as stated before, come from Valiasalai, and Munjira (above, p. 134); the temple of Parthivapuram might not have been denied of his munificence. That Rājarāja also raised new temples in that region is evident from the inscription of the eighth regnal year from the temple at Darisanamkopu, District Kanyakumari.¹ The inscription refers to the destruction of the vessels at Kāndaḷūr. Strangely, reference to this *śālai* continues to occur till the twelfth century, since it is alluded to in an inscription of Parāntaka-Pāṇḍya, a subordinate of Vikrama-Chōḷa (1118-38).²

It is evident that despite the resistance the Chōḷa army received from the *śālais*, no Chōḷa king ever tried to demolish this unique institution. There are definite proofs to show that one of them was renamed after some Chōḷa monarch. Thus a *śālai*, referred to in an inscription of Rājādhirāja I went by the name Śrīvallavapperuñchālai or Rājarāyapperuñchālai, situated in Kaḷikkūḍi, in Puṛattāya-nāḍu, a part of Kanyakumari;³ without any doubt it came to be known as Rājarājapperuñchālai after Rājarāja I (985-1015) after his conquest of the region. This is an unmistakable evidence of the continuity of the *śālais* even during the period of the Chōḷa supremacy.

To return to the main theme. As it is not possible to adapt any dynastic nomenclature, the examples to be described hereunder, are classified as per the major ground-plans, e.g., square, circular and apsidal. The exclusion of oblong shrines from the list need not be construed as its total absence, for the earlier temples, built on such ground-plan, must have survived even in this phase. As champions of Brāhmaṇical religion, the Vēnāḍu rulers were responsible for construction and renovation of many temples within their kingdom. For example, Kōḍai-Kēraḷavarmaṇ (1125-1155) rebuilt the Padmanābhasvāmi temple at Trivandrum, which is oblong on plan. This as well as the temple at Suchindram received special attention from various Vēnāḍu rulers. Incidentally, quite a number of epigraphs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries throw light on the special rules framed for the temple-management. All this, in turn, betrays the complexities that the institutions of temples faced during the time.

A few distributional factors that are obvious to any critical observer may be outlined here. First, there is a clear paucity of circular shrines in north Malabar and correspondingly its predominance in south and central Kerala. Second, the number of square temples in the southern part must have dwindled down to a few examples. But in the absence of definite statistics these may be taken as mere propositions.

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, p. 238.

² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pp. 168-69.

2. SQUARE SHRINE

A. DRĀVIḌA

(i) GENERAL

There are some places in Kerala with a small shrine of the Drāviḍa Order as a subsidiary shrine or as an independent unit. To cite an instance, the Paraśurāmēśvara temple-complex at Tiruvallam, near Trivandrum, contains, among others, three shrines built in Drāviḍa style: these are the shrines meant for Paraśurāma, Brahmā and Matsya-mūrti. Though the epigraphical evidence provides the middle of the twelfth century as the date of the establishment, architecturally the present structures have to be dated to the late seventeenth century (below, pp. 253-54). As the temple-complex has been described in detail in the next chapter, suffice it here to say that the temple of Paraśurāma is an *ēkatala* Drāviḍa-*vimāna* on a circular plan, while the Brahmā temple is square from base to the *śikhara*. The *adhishṭhāna* of the Paraśurāma temple, consisting of *upāna*, short *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda* and *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* in between the *kampas*, is an early example dated to the middle of the twelfth century. It is worth-noting that a few circular shrines in Drāviḍa style were also built, evidently influenced by the circular temples of the indigenous tradition.

A few square shrines—the Kṛishṇa temple in the Parthivapuram complex and a sub-shrine of the same name in the Mahādēva temple-complex at Valiasalai—may be placed in the eleventh century. Brief descriptions of both the shrines have been given earlier. The former is square from base to top, whereas the latter carries an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara* on a square plan. It appears that many small Drāviḍa shrines sprang up in south Kerala in the wake of its intimate contact with the Chōḷa empire, which had by then engulfed the entire Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam. These small shrines in outward appearance look like Chōḷa temples, but a closer examination will reveal that stylistically these are nearer to the Pāṇḍya tradition in that none of the temples show functional *dēva-kōshṭha*, an inalienable feature of the Chōḷa temples even in the examples which came up during the time of Rājādhirāja III or Kulōttuṅga III.

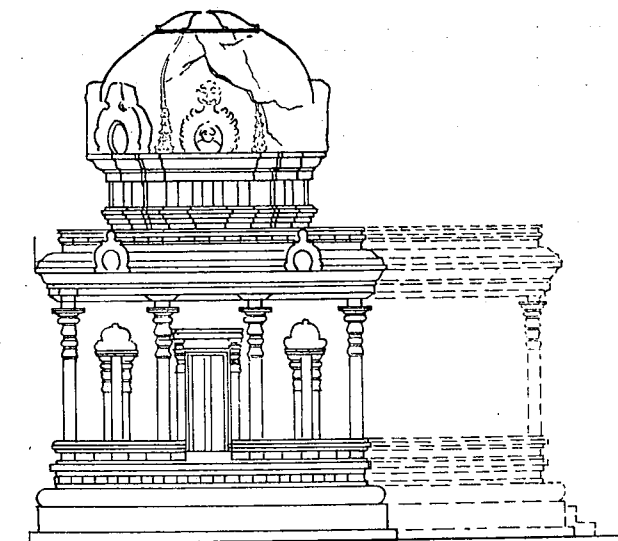
Before we close this section a word must be said about the so-called hall-temple of Kramrisch.¹ The Guhanāthasvāmī temple at Kanyakumari has been included by her in the category of hall-temples on the authority of the *Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtra-dhāra* of Bhōja (1018-1060). Whatever may be the description in the text, the Guhanāthasvāmī temple does not differ from the general type of south Indian temples. Its sanctum is bigger than the pillared *ardha-maṇḍapa* while the *mahā-maṇḍapa* is decidedly a later addition. Similarly, the portico in front was also added subsequently. The temple, facing the east, is built of granite, and at present, without a superstructure. A small domical formation on top may indicate the existence of a superstructure, either of brick or stone, in the original arrangement. On plan

¹Kramrisch, Cousins and Poduval (1970), *op. cit.*, p. 16.

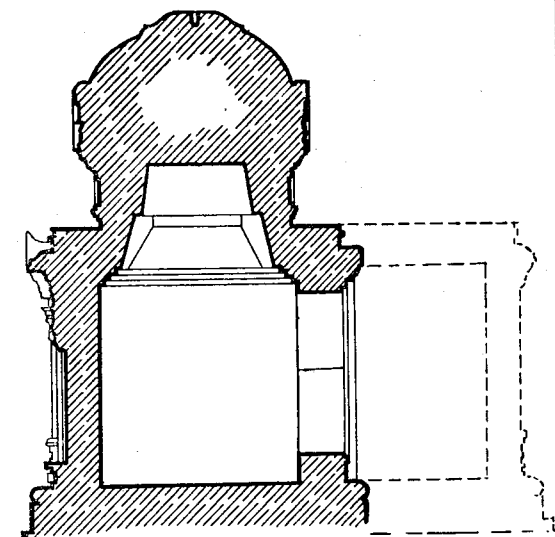
CHALAPURAM:KAṬṬILMĀḌAM

DISTRICT PALGHAT

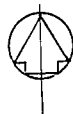
SCALE OF METRES 0 2
SCALE OF FEET 0 2 4 6 8



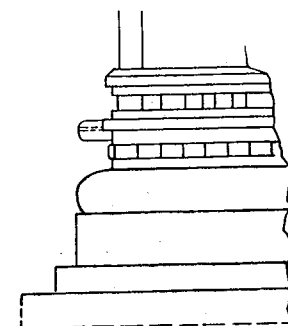
ELEVATION



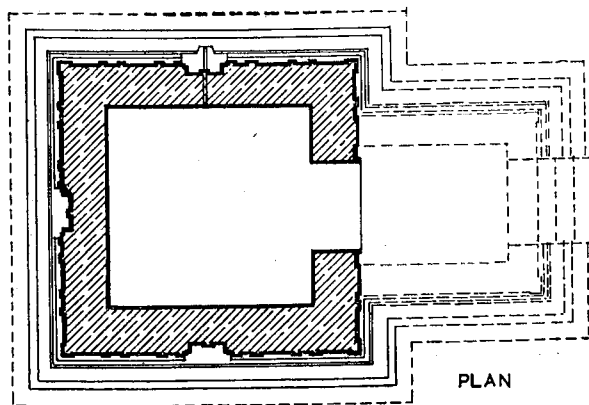
SECTION ON A-A



ADHISHṬHĀNA



CM. 0 25 50
FEET 0 1 2



PLAN

FIG. 40

itself it has not even remote similarity with the true hall-temple like the Lad Khan at Aihole. Nevertheless, it is yet another instance of Chōḷa architecture, the earliest inscription from the temple being that of Rājendra-Chōḷa dated in his 31st regnal year.¹

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Chalapuram: Kaṭṭilmāḍam

(Pl. XXVI; figs. 10 and 40)

Situated right on the Ponnani-Palghat Road, about 5 km to the east of Kuttanad, this deserted all-stone temple, near Chalapuram, in Ottapalam Taluk, of District Palghat, is known popularly as Kaṭṭil-māḍam. A very look at this granite edifice will recall the tradition of *alpa-vimāna* of the early Pāṇḍya or Chōḷa times, but in the absence of any inscription or icon it is not easy to arrive at its actual date. It consists of a square *garbha-griha* and an integrated *ardha-maṇḍapa* projecting out of the former. As it has an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara* it may easily be called, following the widely-used ternary classification, as *Draviḍa-vimāna*. It is a *nirandhāra* temple without any ambulatory.

The temple has all the six parts characteristic of the *śaḍāṅga-vimāna*: *adhishṭhāna*, *bhitti*, *prastara*, *grīvā*, *śikhara* and *stūpī*, the last-mentioned member being now missing. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, flattish *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with dentils, and *paṭṭikā*. Evidently the *adhishṭhāna* is typical of the Kerala style of temples. All the mouldings above the *kumuda* are highly recessed, thereby providing greater horizontality between the *kumuda* and the *kapōta*. The *adhishṭhāna* is followed by the *vēdikā* showing schematically a railed enclosure.

Above the *vēdī* rises the *bhitti* having an entrance from the east. The other three walls have each a *ghana-dvāra* in the centre, and it starts from above the *paṭṭikā*. On the other hand, *vēdikā* serves as the base of the *kuḍya-stambhas* and *tōraṇa*-arches. Decorations on the walls are marked by simplicity and restraint yet they exude a sense of assuredness. Each of the walls has two corner pilasters, besides two more flanking the *ghana-dvāras*. In between the two pilasters or *kuḍya-stambhas* are *makara-tōraṇas*; even the *ghana-dvāras* have *makara-tōraṇas* above them. The concept of *ghana-dvāras* and *makara*-arches without proper *d.vakōshṭhas* is common in Kerala but rare in the Chōḷa tradition. In the Pāṇḍya tradition, sham niches, instead of actual *kōshṭhas*, have a wide vogue; hence, the Kerala tradition may be considered nearer to that of the Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam. There are no columns in the temple but the pilaster-shafts are well-proportioned and have a tetragonal section; *pōtikās* are of the bevelled type.

The *prastara* has a well-defined *uttara*, rather inconspicuous *vājana*, *valabhī* with *bhūta-mālā*, and *kapōta* with *kūḍus* enclosing human faces. Two other mouldings of the entablature—*ālinga* and *antari*—are represented by a recessed blocking course showing the

¹Travancore Archaeological Series, I, p. 118.

representation of dentils or beam-ends, a place meant for *simha-mālā* in the Tamil country. Significantly, the *kaṇṭha*, which should have a frieze of *simha-mālā*, also contains identical decorations in the form of *lupā*-ends. Nevertheless, such decoration is nearer to the timber-work, thereby giving an impression of archaic construction. In Kerala temples, *simha-mālā* marking the ends of the cross-joints in original timber-work is noticed in the *adhishṭhāna*, but rare in the decoration of the *prastara*. The Drāviḍa *vimāna* at Ullal, in South Kanara, has a row of *simha-mālā* on the *prastara*, while the *kaṇṭha* bears dentils in between the *kampas*. The latter mode of decoration of base seems to have originated in some centres in the north. Furthermore, the dentils in the *prastara* can be seen in the Eastern Chālukyan temples at Bikkavolu and in the Santara temples of Humacha, in District Shimoga.

Above the *prastara* rises the octagonal *grīvā* with ribbed decoration, followed by octagonal *śikhara*. Each facet of the octagonal *śikhara* shows a *nāsikā*, encircling a human face. Both the *grīvā* and the *śikhara* are made of one solid stone placed over a corbelled arch.

The temple, no doubt, has the form characteristic of the early style; even morphologically, it partakes of the Chōḷa and the Pāṇḍya features. But the decorative elements and the *adhishṭhāna*-type are typical of the Kerala tradition. And it has to be agreed that it is an example of nice blending of the two styles, which might have taken place in the wake of the Chōḷa-Chēra conflict in the eleventh century.

It is not known whether the temple was dedicated to Śiva or Viṣṇu or to some other deity. No inscription comes from the site.

B. DRĀVIḌA-KĒRAḶA

(i) GENERAL

Broad characteristics of the Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style of temples, assignable to this phase, have already been enumerated (above, p. 71). So far as the plan is concerned, its development took place completely independent of the pure Drāviḍa tradition. All the Drāviḍa temples that grew in the trail of Chōḷa contact were *nirandhāra* temples but this trend failed to influence the indigenous tradition, in which the provision for circumambulation was increased to at least four—two inside the sanctum, one around the Śrī-kōvil and the other around *nāḷambalam*. However, some smaller temples of *nirandhāra* class sprang up as subsidiary shrines in big temple-complexes. Of such shrines, mention may be made of the Gōvardhana shrine in the Kṛishṇa temple-complex at Tirukkulasekharapuram. A brief description of the shrine has already been given, but what is relevant to the present context is the fact that its *adhishṭhāna*, and *hasti-hasta* banisters, the latter sculptured with dancing figures, belong to the Middle phase. The mouldings of the *adhishṭhāna* consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *simha-mālā* and *paṭṭikā*.

The miniature Drāviḍa shrine that remains hidden inside the sanctum has, in most of the cases, octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*. There is every possibility of this type of *vimāna* gaining popularity in this phase because of the close association of, sometimes amounting

to the virtual occupation of territories, by the Chōḷa monarchs. Such shrines, barring a few, are square on plan, and in case they are circular, the interior plan becomes square. We need not, however, dwell on this aspect any more, for all this will be underlined once again while describing the individual example.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Peruvanam: Māḍattilappaṇ shrine

(Pls. XXVIIA, XXVIII and LXXIV; figs. 10 and 12)

The Māḍattilappaṇ shrine in the Siva temple-complex, of Peruvanam, at Cherpu village, in Trichur Taluk of District Trichur, is one of the most outstanding temples of Kerala. It is a *tritala-vimāna* built on a high podium like the *māḍakkōvil* of the Tamiḷ country. Facing the west, the temple has to be approached by a long flight of steps. At first two lateral flights of nine steps meet at a common landing from where ascends another flight of fifteen steps. Let it be mentioned here that this is the most impressive of the two shrines that constitute the complex; the other shrine—the Iraṭṭayappaṇ temple—is circular on plan having openings on the east, the west and the south.

The Māḍattilappaṇ temple is perhaps the first *tritala-vimāna* of the Chēra country, and curiously, even after its construction the type failed to attain popularity. It rises to a total height of 70 ft 3 in (21·41 m) surmounted by octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*, the latter having a *nāsikā* on each side; both the first and the second *talas* have in front *śuka-nāsa* projections. This type of *śikhara*, common in the case of miniature Drāviḍa-*vimāna* housed inside, is rare for the temple proper, since the square shrine in Kerala, carry in the vast majority of the cases, a square *śikhara*. Naturally, it has to be taken as a unique structural conception of the architects of medieval Kerala.

Axially, the plan of the first *tala* consists of a square shrine integrated with a narrow pillared *mukha-maṇḍapa* in front. There runs a *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* around the square *garbhagriha* with *līṅga* inside. The *garbhagriha*, which is circular inside, is a miniature Drāviḍa-shrine having a domical *śikhara* built on horizontal arches. A small oblong space in front of the circular *garbhagriha*, resembling a Drāviḍa shrine, may be taken as its *antarāla*. Above the first storey, rise in succession the *dvitala* and *tritala* parts of the *vimāna*, both exhibiting functional character, as each of them has an opening on the west. But for the octagonal *śikhara* with copper roofing, all the roofs are made of tiles; needless to say, in the upper *talas*, wood has been used profusely.

The temple stands on a granite *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampa*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. It is followed by *vēdī*, above which is built the *bhitti*, in laterite blocks, now heavily plastered. The *hārāntara* recesses of the *bhitti* descend down to the *adhishṭhāna*, while wall-decorations include *ghana-dvāras* in the centre, *kuḍya-stambhas* and false niches with *pañjaras*. Pilasters are tetragonal in the lower half and octagonal in the upper; *pōtikās* that they carry are of the bevelled type, with projecting tenon. Here

the divisions of the wall are rather peculiar in that it has at least seven recesses, with correspondingly eight projections. On the other hand, the *prastara* displays five divisions, each segment having a *kuḍya-stambha* on a minor projection on either side of the *nāsikā-pañjara*. The *hārāntara* recesses have, however, *śālā-pañjara*. All this elaboration bespeaks of the complexities attained in the sphere of wall-decorations in the Middle phase. Each *tala* has *hāra* consisting of *kūṭas*, *śālās* and *pañjaras*.

It is note-worthy that the Mādattilappaṇ temple is also not fronted by a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, a fact that goes to prove that even in the Middle phase the provision of placing a detached *maṇḍapa* was not an essential feature of Kerala's temple-architecture. To cite yet another instance, the Dakṣiṇāmūrti temple at Edappal is also without it. Though no drawing could be prepared of this temple, a few observations on its architecture are worth-recording here.

Edappal: Sukapuram Dakṣiṇāmūrti temple
(Pl. XXX A)

The Sukapuram Dakṣiṇāmūrti temple at Edappal, in Ponnani Taluk, District Malappuram, is a square *dvitala-vimāna*. It has a square *śikhara* with copper sheets affixed to the timber roof by means of nails. Facing the east, the temple consists of a square sanctum and a narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the roof over the *mukha-maṇḍapa* serving as the *śuka-nāsā* of the temple. Being a *sāndhāra-prāsāda* it has an ambulatory around the square *garbhagṛiha*, which is the usual miniature Drāviḍa *vimāna*.

The granite *adhishṭhāna*, with *padma-pādukā* below, consists of *upāna*, short *jagatī*, *vṛittakumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. Above the *adhishṭhāna* rises the *vēdikā* with only *pādas*. Walls are divided into five bays by means of *hārāntara*-recesses. Two corner pilasters carry cross-corbels showing incipient *pushpa-pōtikās*. Two such *kuḍya-stambhas* flank the *ghana-dvāras*, overtopped by simple arches in the central bay. The *hārāntaras* have shallow niches with *śālā-śikharas* while the projected parts are embellished with tall *śālā-pañjaras*. *Karṇas* have *vṛitta-sphuṭita*, flanked on either side by *kuḍya-stambhas*. It has a defined *prastara* showing *uttara*, *vājana*, *valabhī*, having the representations of *lupās*, and *kapōta* decorated with plain *kūḍus*. Above the *kapōta*, rises the parapet with *hāra* decorations. Similar decorations are to be seen also on the *grīvā*, carrying a pyramidal roof with *stūpī* on top.

The temple is associated with at least four inscriptions¹ but none of them provides any date. But on stylistic considerations it may be dated to the second half of the thirteenth century.

Maniyur: Subrahmanya temple

(Pls. XXX B, XXXI, XXXII A and LXXV; figs. 10, 13 and 15)

Situated at Maniyur, about 3.22 kms to the north-west of Munderi *maṭham*, in Tali-paramba Taluk, District Cannanore, the Subrahmanya temple is an example of *dvitala*

¹ *Annual Report on Epigraphy 1895*, nos. 208-211.

vimāna built on a square plan. It faces the east and is built, like most of the temples in north Malabar, entirely of laterite. Axially, it consists of a square *sāndhāra*-shrine, connected with a later *mukha-maṇḍapa* of smaller dimensions, and a detached *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, all being enclosed by a *nālabalam*. The shrine houses a square *garbha-griha* in the centre having its own flight of steps. With a circular domical top, which is covered by a lotus-design in stucco, the *garbha-griha*, with three *ghana-dvāras*, stands on its own *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛittā-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampa*, *kaṇṭha*, *jagatī* and *paṭṭikā*. It is thus a small Draviḍa-*vimāna* of the *alpa-vimāna* class. There are two *pradakṣiṇā-pathas* around this miniature *vimāna*, both the walls being pierced by four openings. The occurrence of four opening in this *sāndhāra* temple imparts a *sarvatōbhadrā* character to it. It was provided later with a four-pillared *mukha-maṇḍapa*, also with four openings, as one sees in the Kīlatali Śiva temple or the Lakshminārāyaṇa temple at Panniyur. The pillars are arranged into a square instead of forming a nave and aisles. A *sōpāna*, with *hasti-hasta* banisters, takes one to the *mukha-maṇḍapa*; *phalakas* of the flight of steps bear *tōraṇa*-motifs in the form of arches enclosing a figure of Gajalakṣmī.

Wall-decorations, which are without any recession or return, display many early and interesting features. The *adhishṭhāna*, also of laterite, of the temple proper consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛittā-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. Its *vēdikā* has *pādas* without any floral designs. In some later period, the *kaṇṭha* was embellished with granite *simha-mālā*, some traces of which are still extant. The *nāla* in the form of a fluted shaft has an open *ambu-mārga* with a lipped end or *gō-mukha*. Apart from the doors, the walls are relieved with pilasters and *kapōta-paṇjaras*. Some of the niches exhibit beautiful wood-work meant to be used as *jālakas*. Walls of the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, which hides the front-wall of the shrine, have also *jāli*-windows and *kuḍya-stambhas* but the former is crowned by *makara-tōraṇa* instead of *sālā-sikhara*.

Of the components of the *prastara*, three mouldings—*vājana*, *bhūta-valabhī*, covered with stucco, and *kapōta* decorated with *kūḍus*—are clearly defined. Above the *prastara*, is the first roof, made of tiles; the pyramidal second roof has also tiles with a *stūpī* as the crowning member. The square *grīvā* bears stylized *hāra*-decoration. Both the storeys were originally surrounded by wooden bracket figures, of which *gaja-vyālas* are conspicuous by their presence. The *mukha-maṇḍapa* has only one storey, and on either side of its main eastern entrance is a *dvāra-pāla*, made of granite. These two-armed *dvāra-pālas* are considerably late in date and are carved out of granite in characteristic Kerala idiom. They stand, as it were, on the coil of a hooded cobra, and one of the legs that winds round the mace rests on its spread-out hood.

It has been stated earlier that the *kaṇṭha* and *vēdikā* do not have any floral design, an ornamental motif that made its emergence in this phase itself. On the contrary, the granite door-sills have floral designs alternating with *pādas* or rail-pattern. Perhaps these are remnants of the first renovation when the *kaṇṭha* was provided with *simha-mālā* in granite. In all probability, this renovation took place within a century or so of its first coming into existence, because temples like the Vaḍakkunnātha of Trichur and the Rāma

temple at Triprayar have made use of the floral design as a decorative element of the *kaṇṭha* in the eleventh century itself.

Stylistically, the temple may be dated to the eleventh, and the first renovation to the twelfth century. There is an undated Vaṭṭeluttu inscription in front of the temple which may be dated palaeographically to the twelfth century. It registers an argeement made by the *poduval* and *ūr* of Maṇiyūr-Piḷarar;¹ the inscription presupposes the existence of the establishment. Furthermore, as will be shown below, its architectural features are comparable to the Kōḍavalam Viṣṇu temple at Pullur, associated with an inscription of a Chēra king Bhāskāra Ravivarman III (1035-1090). The occurrence of a Śāstā image in the compound of the temple may also be dated stylistically to the twelfth century (above, p. 111). But the standing image of Subrahmaṇya and its small bronze counterpart, enshrined in the *garbha-griha*, may be dated to the eleventh century.

Pullur: Śrī Kōḍavalam Viṣṇu temple

(Pl. XXXII B and fig. 41)

Śrī Kōḍavalam Viṣṇu temple at Pullur, in Hosdrug Taluk, District Cannanore, is built entirely of laterite; albeit, in conformity with the usual practice the *phalakas* and the steps of the *sōpāna*, door-frames and the *praṇāla* are made out of granite. Facing the east, the temple consists of a square sanctum and is without a *mukha-maṇḍapa*. The laterite *adhishṭhāna* of the temple consists of *upāna*, almost buried, short *jagatī*, *vr̥tta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*; its *vēdī* has *pādas*. The *bhitti* and the *adhishṭhāna* have no recesses or returns, though the walls have *kuḍya-stambhas* and *jālī*-windows with *śālā-śikhara*, besides two *ghana-dvāras*. All the *kuḍya-stambhas* are tetragonal in section and have *mālā-sthāna*, *padma-bandha*, *kalasa*, inconspicuous *tāḍī*, highly compressed *kumbha* and *padma* with prominent *phalaka* and *vīra-kāṇṭha*. They carry four-armed bevelled corbels, over which run *uttara* and *vājana* in the form of two blocking courses. It has a *bhūta-valabhī*, the *bhūtas* being stuccoed. Similar stucco-figures are placed inside the arches of the *śālā-śikhara*. The *kapōta*, however, is not very prominent. Originally, the walls were plastered and also painted, traces of which can still be noticed. Without any doubt, the paintings are considerably late. Its pyramidal tiled roof was rebuilt about two decades back replacing the thatched one, which again, according to the local reports, was preceded by a roof made of small old tiles. It is crowned by a *stūpī*.

The temple has a detached *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, built on four columns. Its *adhishṭhāna*, of laterite, is composed of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. The *adhishṭhāna* of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, barring the *mañchaka* type of some of the temples of south Kerala, had almost become standardized throughout Kerala. There is a laterite *balipīṭha* in front of the main entrance to the *nāḷambalam*.

¹ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1928-29*, nos. 447-48. The other inscription (448) registers an *aṭṭilpēru* given to the seven *uvachchar* of the temple.

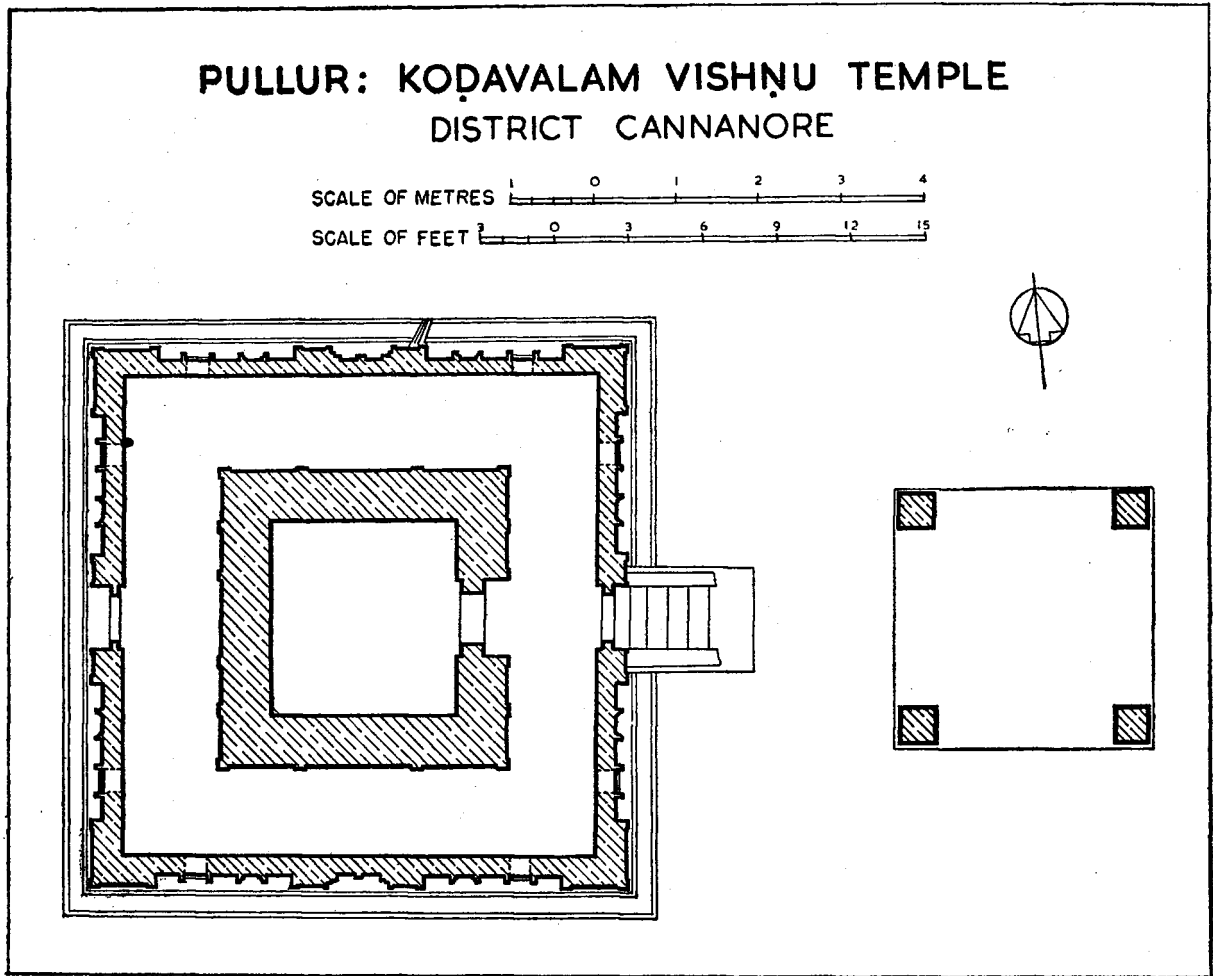


FIG. 41

The Kōḍavalam Viṣṇu temple is a *sāndhāra-vimāna* with a square *garbhagrha*, having its own domical roof, perhaps of the octagonal variety. A *pradakṣiṇā-pāṭha* runs round this miniature Drāviḍa shrine and no columns, as it is always the case with the *sama-chaturāśra sāndhāra*-temple, are to be seen along the ambulatory. Inside the *garbhagrha* is enshrined a standing four-armed image of Viṣṇu in *sama-bhaṅga*. It holds *chakra* and *śankha* in upper hands and the lower right is in the *varada* and the lower left holds the club. The god has a *upavīta* worn in *nivīta* fashion; other usual ornaments include *kirīṭa*, *kuṇḍalas*, *kaṇṭha-hāra*, etc. It is interesting to note that the temple does not fall in the category of the *sarvatōbhadrā* temple, for it has two (on the east and the west) and not four functional doors. Temples with two or even three doors appear only in the Middle phase.

There is a Gaṇapati sub-shrine at a lower level on the south-western side. Further, the Śāstā temple, facing the west, is situated opposite the Viṣṇu temple. To the local people, it is older than the Viṣṇu temple proper. This is also built of laterite, including

even the banisters. Only the channelled *praṇāla* coming out of the *kaṇṭha*, is made out of granite. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. It is an example of small *nirandhāra* temple enshrining an image of Śāstā. To the north of the Śāstā shrine, stands a small temple, also facing the east, and enshrines the images of Vārāhī and Narasimhamūrti.

A granite slab to the south of the main temple contains a Vaṭṭeluttu inscription of the time of Chēra king Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ III *alias* Manukulādichchadēvar (1035-90).¹ It records the gift of three *kalaṇḍu* of gold for the bathing of the deity, thereby indicating the existence of the temple prior to the setting up of the donatory record. As the inscription is dated in the fifty-fifth regnal year, the gift was possibly effected in the last year (1090) of the reign of Bhāskara Ravivarmaṇ III. In that case the temple might have been built in the middle of the eleventh century or so.

Anantapuram: Anantapadmanābhasvāmī temple

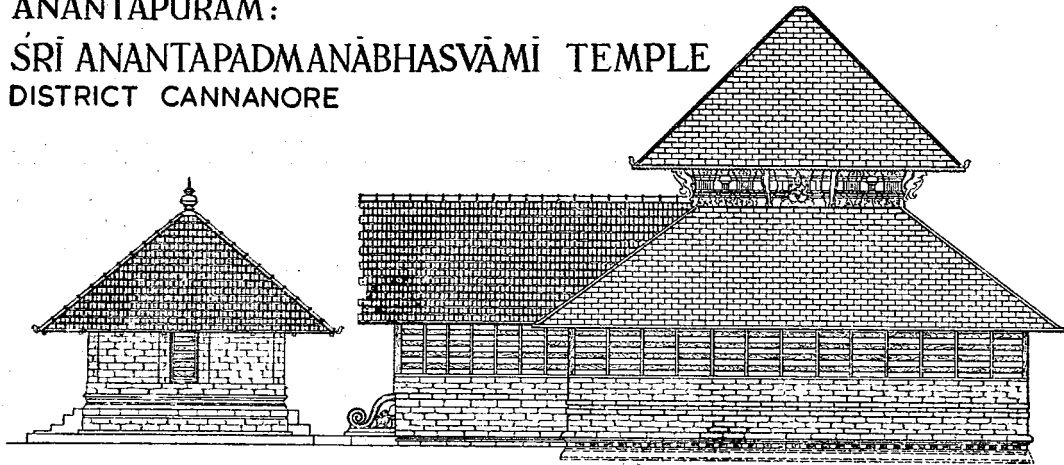
(Pls. XXXIII B, XXXIV A and B; figs. 9 and 42)

The Anantapadmanābhasvāmī temple of Anantapuram at Kannuru, near Kumbala, in Kasargod Taluk, District Cannanore, stands almost like a water-pavilion inside a huge tank, known locally as Anantapura-kere, and in Survey of India maps as Anantapur Gudda. All round the stepped tank are to be seen ruins of temples and other buildings, suggesting the importance of the place in bygone times. The distance between the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* and the *sōpānas* of the tank is spanned by a few planks. But for this make-shift arrangement, the temple is surrounded on all the sides by water. Built as usual on a square plan, the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* has a pyramidal tiled roof on a wooden frame. Although enclosed by walls of laterite blocks—indeed an unusual arrangement—there are four stone columns inside. Its *adhishṭhāna* is composed of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. Another flight of steps takes one to the *mukha-maṇḍapa*.

The temple proper, built of laterite and wood, is a *dvitala-vimāna* of the *sama-chaturāśra* type. Axially, the east-facing square sanctum has an integrated *mukha-maṇḍapa* and a detached *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. The square *garbha-griha* is in the centre of the shrine with a spacious ambulatory all round. Here the *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* is definitely functional, for the exterior walls of the *garbha-griha*, which has a *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna*, is adorned with *dēva-kōshṭhas* enshrining the seated four-armed image of Viṣṇu, in stucco, over a wooden armature; all the images bear films of paint. Inside the *garbha-griha* are installed the stucco images of Viṣṇu as Vaikuṇṭhanātha, with his consorts Śrī-Dēvī and Bhū-Dēvī. The fallen serpent-hood can still be seen to the left of the god. The *garbha-griha* has a domical *śikhara* of the *ashtāśra* type but without a prominent *grīvā* and a *stūpī*. So far as the occurrence of *dēva-kōshṭhas* is concerned the temple bears similarity with the Anantapadmanābha temple at Karkala in District South Kanara. In the *dēva-kōshṭhas* of the last-mentioned temple are enshrined variously the images of Śaṅkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

¹ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1962-63*, no. B. 125.

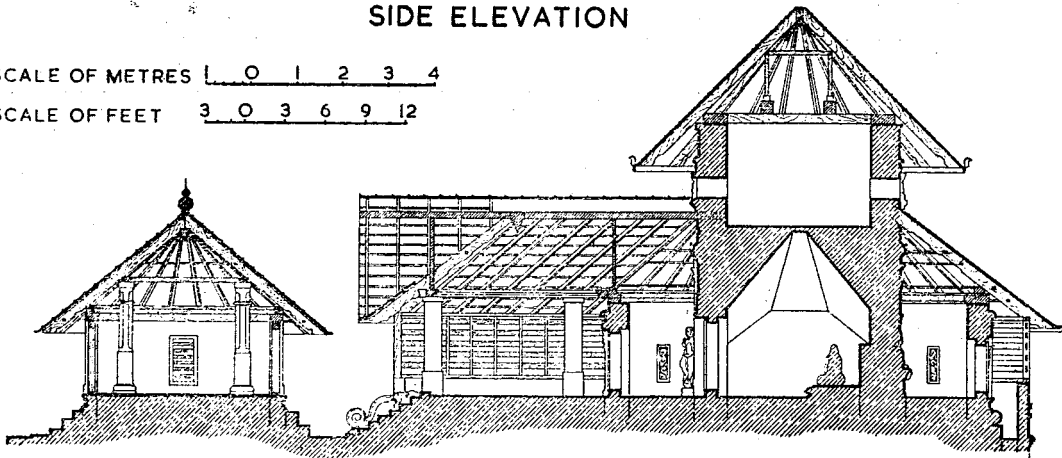
ANANTAPURAM:
ŚRĪ ANANTAPADMANĀBHASVĀMĪ TEMPLE
DISTRICT CANNANORE



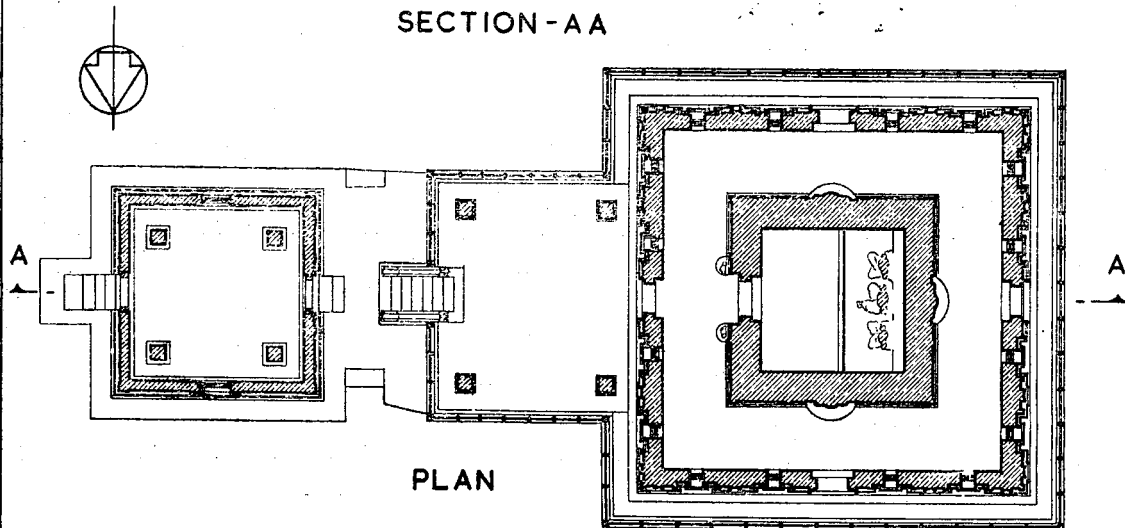
SIDE ELEVATION

SCALE OF METRES 0 1 2 3 4

SCALE OF FEET 3 0 3 6 9 12



SECTION-AA



PLAN

FIG. 42

The *bāhya-bhitti* of the temple is quite ornamental and stands on an *adhishṭhāna*, the mouldings of which consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. It has a well-defined *prastara* consisting of *uttara*, *vājana*, *valabhī* with stuccoed *bhūtas*, *kapōta* followed by *ālīṅga* and *antari*. The *grīvā* shows stylized *hāra* decorations and also *grīvā-kōshṭhas* with fine wooden images of Viṣṇu, Brahmā and others. Walls have *kuḍya-stambhas* and *jālī*-windows with *śālā-sikhara*, the *jālīs* themselves taking the form of some divinities as one finds in the Nōḷamba temple at Hemavati, District Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. Around the *bāhya-bhitti* runs another *pradakṣhiṇā-paṭha* edged by lattice-work. In some later period, the temple was painted with murals depicting various scenes like Naṭarāja, Narasiṁha, Sūrya, Bhagavatī, apart from wavy floral designs.

The presence of *dēva-kōshṭhas* and the use of stucco images may indicate the influence of the Tuḷunāḍu idiom on this complex. An inscribed stone on the north-eastern corner of the tank, in front of Gaṇapati shrine, records the grant of certain protection to the village Mugeraira. Incidentally, it is one of the few Tuḷu inscriptions known to us, though written in Malayāḷam characters of about the fifteenth century A.D.¹ Nevertheless, the inscription does not seem to have any bearing on the beginning of this structure. As the stucco images in the *dēva-kōshṭhas* of the *garbha-griha* may be dated to the eleventh or twelfth century, we may ascribe to the temple a date of *circa* A.D. 1100.

To the north-east of the tank stands the small Gaṇapati shrine, built of laterite, while the Pārthasārathi temple, facing the east, on the south-west corner of the tank, is made partly of granite and partly of laterite. It is in ruins since its *bāhya-bhittis* have crumbled down though the Drāviḍa *vimāna* that it enshrines is more or less undisturbed. Thus it is certain that the sub-shrine is a typical *sāndhāra-vimāna* of the Middle phase. Like the Gaṇapati temple at Ullal, near Mangalore, the Drāviḍa shrine, which is without an *antarāla* or *mukha-maṇḍapa*, has an *adhishṭhāna* comprising *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils in between the *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*, followed by a *vēdī*. A small *praṇāla*, held in *simha's* mouth, protrudes from the *kaṇṭha*. Walls are made of laterite slabs and relieved with sham niches, crowned with *makara-tōraṇas*, and *ghana-dvāras*. It is noteworthy that the temple has a square *grīvā* and *śikhara*, the latter with *nāsikās*, enclosing human face, on all the four sides. Inside the *garbha-griha* is enshrined the two-armed image, in standing posture, with his right hand holding a whip and the left being in the *kaṭi* holding a *śaṅkha* in the hand.

3. CIRCULAR SHRINE

A. DRĀVIḌA-KĒRAḌA

(i) GENERAL

There is a definite predominance of circular *vimānas* in the Middle phase; moreover, these are more common in the southern and central Kerala than in north Malabar. Temples

¹ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1935-36*, no. 111.

of very large dimensions were built in this phase too; sometimes, as in the case of the Peruntirukōyil, at Udayamperur, District Ernakulam, the diameter is as large as 17 m. To our knowledge, this is the biggest circular shrine in Kerala. It is closely followed by the Mahādēva temple at Ettumanur, District Kottayam. Irrespective of the chronological position, on the basis of diameters, circular temples may be divided broadly under three groups, viz., (a) those below 6 m (b) between 6 and 12 m and (c) above 12 m. The maximum number of circular temples falls in the middle group which accounts for about 24 examples (57%). In the first group are included temples ascribable either to the Early or the Late phase. The examples of the larger series may be assigned to the Middle phase when temples of bigger dimensions came into vogue, reflecting a state of affluence. On this analogy the Mahādēva temple at Ettumanur deserves to be included in the Middle phase, though the temple was totally renovated in the sixteenth century. Another interesting fact is the concentration of large circular edifices in the Chēra country or central Kerala.

Many of the *adhishṭhānas* of these temples bear inscriptions of contemporary times. But the first group does not have any such distinguishing mark. Of the temples with inscriptions on *adhishṭhānas*, noteworthy are the Vaḍakkunnātha temple at Trichur, Rāma temple at Triprayar, Subrahmaṇya temple at Manjeri, Śiva temple at Kaviyur, and Vāmana-Mahāvishṇu temple at Tirkakara (pl. XXXIII A). It appears that engraving inscriptions on *adhishṭhāna* assumed popularity in south India from the time of the later Pallavas but the climax was reached during the time of the Imperial Chōḷas. So, it may not be a mere conjecture if it is said that this practice was introduced after several Chōḷa inroads into Kerala that brought about a cultural fusion in different spheres of activities.

Quite a good number of temples may be ascribed to this phase but we will confine our attention mainly to those examples where additions and alterations are comparatively lesser. Again, preference has to be given perforce to those sites where we have been able to prepare drawings of the shrine-interiors, because the main distinction of the Middle phase is the presence of miniature Drāviḍa shrine and, more often than not, double *pradakṣiṇā-paṭhas* and columns therein. The arrangement of columns in the ambulatories of the circular *vimānas* is a very interesting study, specially because of its absence in the square shrines as well as in apsidal temples of the *nirandhāra* variety. Their occurrence in the circular shrines was possibly dictated by some structural requirements primarily to distribute the load uniformly, as the central shrine of the Drāviḍa order is just a free-standing structure inside a larger unit.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Manjeri: Subrahmaṇya shrine of Karikkaḍ-kshetram

(Pl. XXXVIII; fig. 43)

The Subrahmaṇya shrine of Karikkaḍ-kshētram at Trikkangod-aṁśam and Karikkad-dēśam of Manjeri Taluk, District Malappuram, is an impressive *dvitala-vimāna*, facing the

east. It is also built partly of granite and partly of laterite, with timber constituting an important material in the superstructure. The *adhishṭhāna* is composed of *upāna*, short *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas*, *valabhī*, simple *kapōta* and *prati*, followed by *vēdikā*. On the *jagatī* and octagonal *kumuda* are to be seen inscriptions datable to the twelfth century. One of the records states of the gift of land by one Iravikāḷaṇ *alias* Urachchaṇ of Vaiyya-nāḍu for offering food to the god Tirukkarik-kāṭṭumēltēvar.¹ This type of

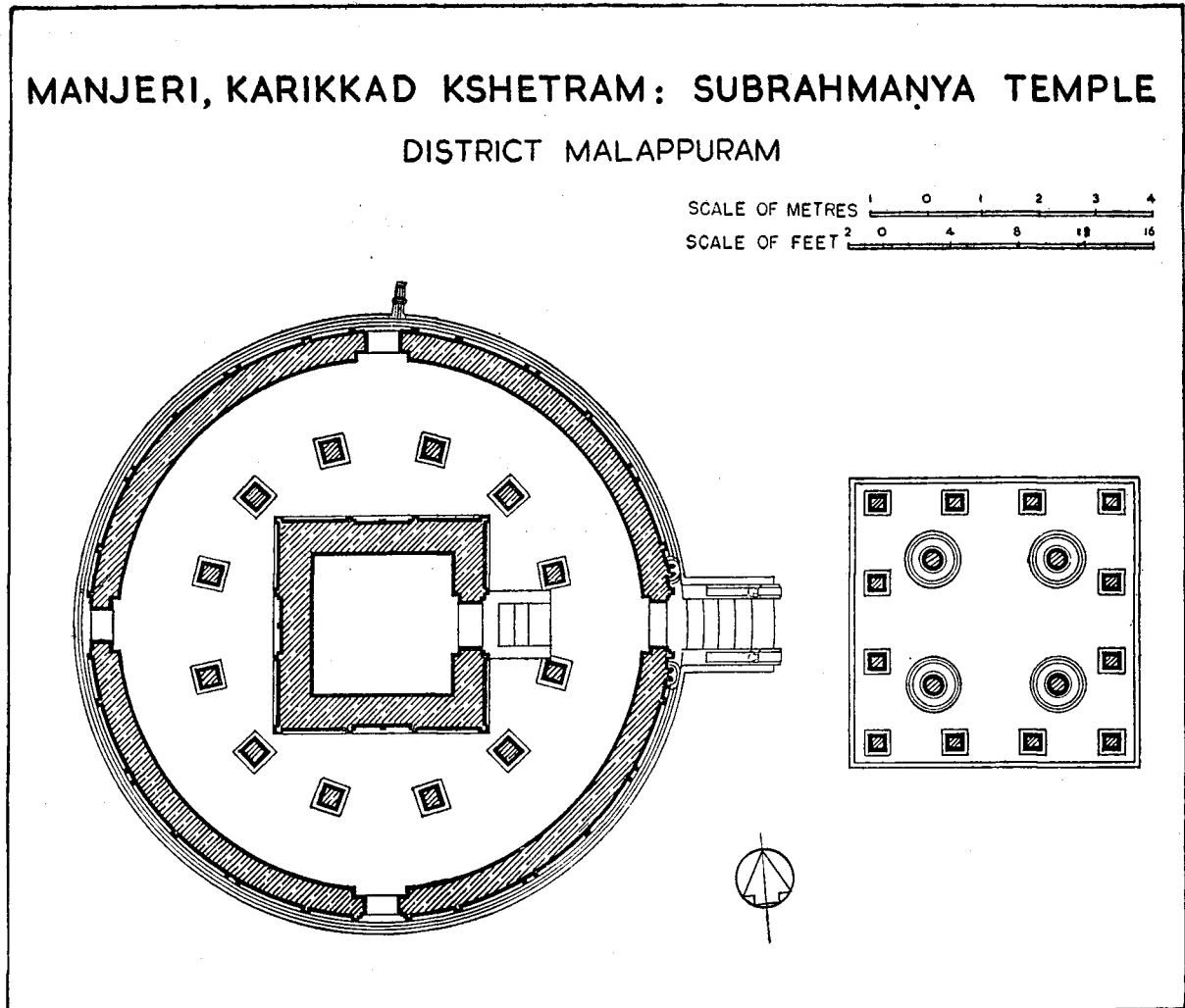


FIG. 43

adhishṭhāna also occurring in the Rāma temple at Triprayar or the Vaḍakkunnātha temple at Trichur may easily be dated to the eleventh century, and considering this fact the present temple may be dated also to the same period. None the less, from the *kaṇṭha* of the

¹Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1959-60, nos. 234-237.

adhishthāna issues forth the granite *praṇāla* having a simple and inconspicuous shaft, octagonal in cross-section. Evidently, the fluted *śuṇḍu* is absent here. The other granite element is the *sōpāna*, with its *phalakas* showing the figure of lion. On either side of the entrance stands a *dvāra-pāla*, carved out of granite, ascribable to the Late phase.

The wall above the *vēdikā* is made of laterite blocks, duly plastered with lime. Neither the wall nor the *adhishthāna* has any recession though the former is pierced on the four sides by door, the characteristic of the *sarvatōbhadra* class of temples. However, the wall bears *kuḍya-stambhas* and simple *tōraṇas*. In all likelihood, the old *bhitti* has been replaced by a new one in a later period. Above the wall rests the sloping copper roof with bevelled edges; the *grīvā* or the second storey is carved with the *hāra*. Over the *grīvā* comes the conical roof, also of copper, pinnaced by a *stūpī*. There is a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front with tiled pyramidal roof.

Inside the circular temple is housed a square Drāviḍa *vimāna* as the *garbha-griha*, with ambulatory all round. A row of twelve columns along the *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* encircle the *garbha-griha*, graced by a standing image of Subrahmaṇya.

Pulpatta: Śiva temple

(Figs. 9, 15 and 44)

The Śiva temple at Pulpatta in Pulpatta-dēśam and aṁśam, of Manjeri Taluk, District Malappuram, is a massive circular edifice. Now almost in ruins, it is enclosed by a *nālambalam*, made of laterite blocks. The temple, facing the east, has a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, rebuilt a decade back. Two square shrines, one meant for Śiva and the other for the trident, have been raised partly on the ruins of the eastern wing of the *nālambalam*. As usual, the *adhishthāna* of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* is made of granite and having the mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. Its *balipīṭha* is built of laterite.

The temple proper stands on an *upapīṭha* comprising only two simple mouldings looking like the *upāna* and *jagatī*. Its *adhishthāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *gala-pādas*, *valabhī*, *kapōta* and *prati*. Above the *prati* rises the *vēdikā*, also with *pādas*. The *praṇāla* comes out of the *kapōta* and is in the form of fluted shaft provided with an *ambu-mārga* or channel, its lipped end simulating the *gō-mukha*. All this is made of granite, and so also is the *sōpāna*, with *hasti-hasta* banisters bearing the figure of lion. The octagonal *kumuda* of the *adhishthāna* has an inscription engraved in the characters of the eleventh century. It seems to record the proceedings of an assembly consisting of representatives of the Aṟunūṟruvar and Muṇṇūṟruvar.¹ Hence, there cannot be any doubt about the temple coming into being in the eleventh century.

It is a *sāndhāra-vimāna* of the Kerala tradition, since its *garbha-griha* has its own *grīvā* and *śikhara* of the Drāviḍa Order. But the plan of the inner shrine is rather unique because

¹Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1958-59, no. B. 282.

it is circular both internally and externally. Another peculiarity here is the absence of columns in the *pradakshinā-patha* that circles round the *garbha-griha*.

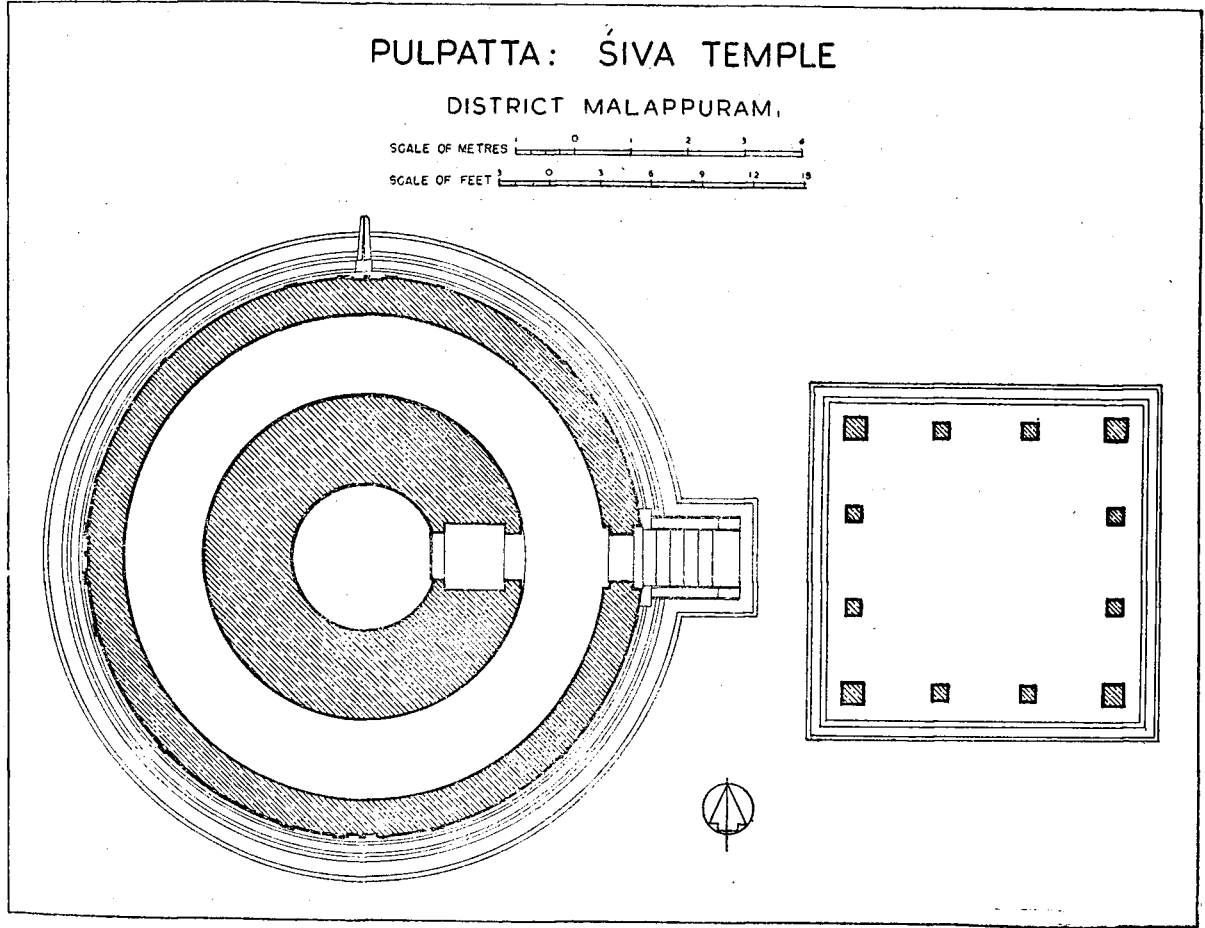


FIG. 44

Although the *adhishṭhāna* of the *bāhya-bhitti* and the ground-plan are old, its *bhitti* must have undergone alteration in subsequent times, because the wall is bereft of all decorative elements except the *ghana-dvāras*. Even the absence of doors is unusual, for temples having identical *kapōta-bandha* type of *adhishṭhāna* like the Subrahmaṇya temple of Karikkaḍ-kshētram at Manjeri, the Tiruvembilappaṇ temple at Venganellur, District Trichur, the Rāma temple at Tripprayar, and the Vaḍakkunnātha temple at Trichur have either four or three doors. Perhaps originally it, too, had four doors peculiar to the *sarvatobhadra* class of *vimānas*.

Above the circular *bhitti* comes the circular *grīvā*, carrying an octagonal tiled roof, built in recent times. However, some traces of the *hāra* can be seen on the *grīvā* or the second *tala* of the *vimāna*, pinnaced by a *stūpī*.

Trichur : Vaḍakkunnātha temple

(Pls. XXXV, XXXVI and XXXIX; figs. 10, 17, 45)

The Vaḍakkunnātha, in the heart of Trichur city, District Trichur, is a triple-shrined temple-complex, comprising three west-facing sanctums of Vaḍakkunnātha *alias* Tēn-Kailāsanātha, Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, and Rāma. To the west of the Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, stands a small Gaṇapati shrine; an inscription from this shrine refers the locality as Tiruchchapērur. The name Trichur must have been derived from Tiruchchapērur or as, another inscription from the temple-complex spells it, Tiruchchuppērur. Whatever that may be, of all the shrines here, the Vaḍakkunnātha is by far the most important and also the oldest. Undeniably its antiquity goes back to the eleventh century as can be affirmed from the date of the inscription on the *ṛitta-kumuda*. Written in characters of the eleventh century, it refers to the gift of stone by one Sattaṇ Śuvaraṇ of Mullaippaḷli.¹ It is likely that the stone mentioned in the epigraph may denote the granite slabs used in constructing the *adhishthāna*.

The temple is a circular *ekatala-vimāna* with two main entrances—the western one for the Vaḍakkunnātha and the eastern door for his consort. Apart from the two doors, there is another functional door on the south. There are then three doors in all, and naturally the fourth one above the *praṇāla* is a *ghana-dvāra*. The western entrance alone has a double *sōpāna* meeting at a common landing, which is screened by a carved granite *phalaka*.

The temple has a *kapōta-bandha* type of *adhishthāna*, constituted of the mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas*, *valabhī*, *kapōta* and *prati*. A new decorative element—*pādas* alternating with floral designs—makes its appearance here. Below the *adhishthāna*, rests the *padma-pāduka*. Now, the granite *praṇāla* occupies the upper part of the *adhishthāna* starting from *kapōta* down to the *kaṇṭha*. Its *ambu-mārga* is a fluted shaft held by a *śiṃha-mukha*. However, instead of *gō-mukha* it terminates into some sort of a *bhūta-mukha*, if we are allowed to coin the term. The *praṇāla* rests, as it were, on the head a seated dwarf figure. It has a lovely face, full of pleasing expressions. Stylistically, the sculpture may be dated to the period of the Imperial Chōḷas.

Atop the *vēdī*, also of granite, has been built the laterite wall bearing multitudes of later accretions like successive layers of lime-plaster, paintings and various other fanciful decorations, devoid of any aesthetic quality. Yet it must be accepted that the wall, with its recesses and projections starting from above the *adhishthāna*, represents the original construction. Bases of *kuḍya-stambhas*, which are partly octagonal and partly fluted, rise from above the *adhishthāna*, while the sham niches in the *hārāntara* start from the top of the *vēdikā*. These niches are in the shape of *śālā-pañjara*, which has its own *uttara*, *valabhī*, *kapōta* and so on. Most of the *pōtikās* are of the bevelled type with a tenon-like protuberance in the centre. Niches enclose *jālakas* displaying human figures, carved out of stone. Of the members of the entablature, only the *valabhī* with a dentil course and *kapōta* with *kūḍus* are

¹Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy, 1970-71, no. 73.

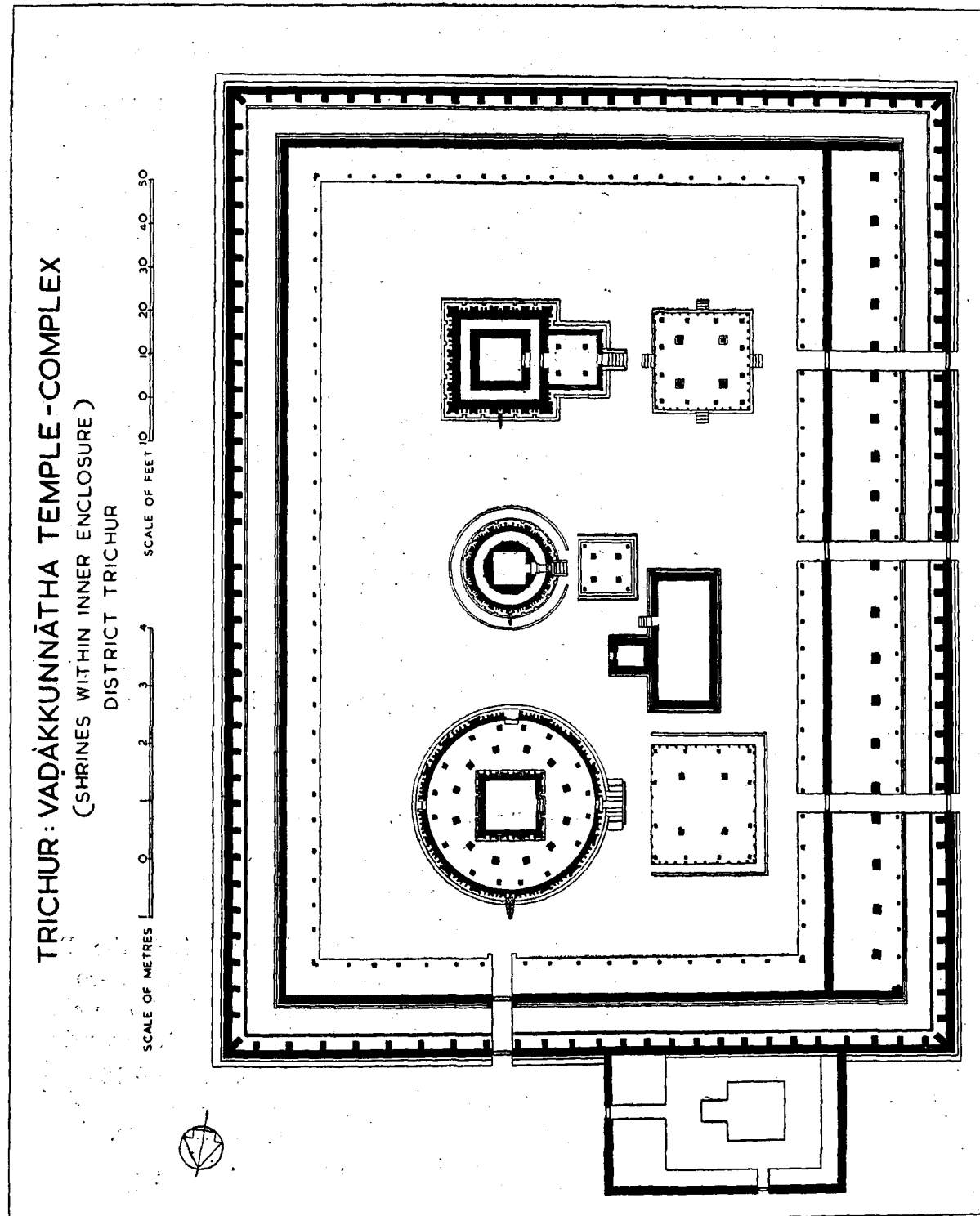


FIG. 45

conspicuous. Even the *kuḍya-stambhas* are in the *hārāntara* recesses but the projected parts exhibit another type of *kōshṭha-pañjara* standing on two pilasters, placed wide apart, but they do not enclose either any *jāli* or false niches.

Interior of the shrine is marked by interesting arrangement of columns around the central *garbha-griha*. A small square *Drāviḍa-vimāna* serves as the *garbha-griha*, laid inside the Kerala style of temples, with conical roof, the last-mentioned unit being covered with copper sheets. The miniature *Drāviḍa* shrine has an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*, and the most striking feature is the presence of the recesses and returns in the *bhitti* and the *adhishṭhāna*. The mouldings comprise *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*, followed by *vēdikā* which shows floral pattern alternating with *pādas*. Along the *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* are to be seen two rows of columns—the inner row having twelve and outer row sixteen. Truly speaking, the plan is reminiscent of the *padma-prāsādas* of the *Śilpa*-texts: the walls and the columns representing the petals while the central *garbha-griha* standing for the thalamus of the lotus. The back part of the square *Drāviḍa* shrine has been utilized as the place for enshrining Ammaṇ.

In front of the main western entrance is the square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* with a pyramidal roof. It has two concentric rows of stone columns—the inner row having four and the outer twelve. The granite *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upnāa*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. Other structures of the complex must have come up in subsequent times, the latest notable addition, barring the most recent ones, being the restoration of the murals of the Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa shrine by one Kaṇṇaṇ in A.D. 1731. It is worth-recording that this complex has no *dhvaja-stambha* or *dīpa-stambha*, although each shrine-entrance through the *nālambalam*, is graced by a *balipiṭha*. There is, however an imposing *kūttambalam*. It is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the temple-site can claim greater antiquity because of its association with group of discarded *Sapta-mātrikā* images, ascribable at least to the ninth century.

Triprayar: Rāma temple

(Pl. XL A; figs. 10 and 46)

Located in picturesque surroundings on the bank of the Triprayar river, the Rāma temple at Triprayar, in Chowghat Taluk, District Trichur, is another large temple-complex almost contemporary to the Vaḍakkunnātha temple described above. It is also an *ekatala-vimāna* though built on a massive base carrying a very impressive conical roof, covered with copper sheets. Equally impressive is its square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* carrying a pyramidal copper roof. Both the structures, needless to say, are pinnacled by a *stūpī*. Like the Vaḍakkunnātha temple, it has no *dhvaja-stambha* or *dīpa-stambha* in front of the entrance, through the *nālambalam*, which surrounds the circular shrine; there is, however, a *balipiṭha* near the main entrance. Between the *nālambalam* and *prākāra* stands the only sub-shrine dedicated to Śāstā.

The temple faces the east. Its granite *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas*, *valabhī*, *kapōta* and *prati*; it is followed by *vēdikā*, also of granite. Both the *kaṇṭha* and the *vēdī* have floral designs alternating with the *pādas*. The *nāla* is an ornamental *śuṇḍu* held in *simha*'s mouth, which occupies the *kapōta*, *valabhī* and *kaṇṭha*

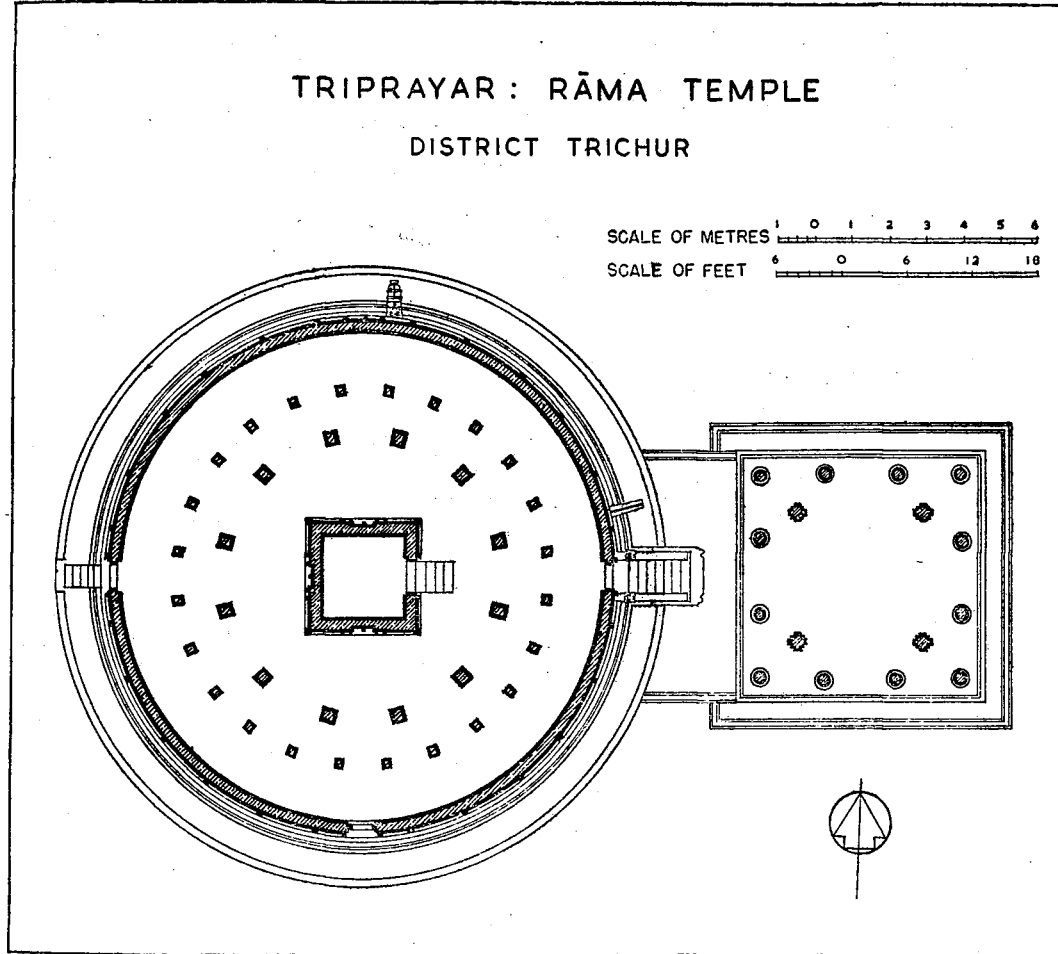


FIG. 46

of the granite-built *adhishṭhāna*. Another notable feature is the placement of a standing *bhūta*-figure, probably representing *śaṅkha-nidhi*, near the *praṇāla*. It is in the pose of blowing the conch and the *gō-mukha* of the covered *ambu-mārga* rests on its head. The entrance into the temple is through a *hasti-hasta sōpāna*, built fully of granite; the *phalakas* are carved with figure of lion.

Above the *vēdikā* rises the *bhitti* without any ornamental elements. There are only broad featureless pilasters and doors to relieve the monotony of the wall. Of the doors, three are functional and the one to the north is a *ghana-dvāra*. Thus, in this respect as well it is similar to the Vaḍakkunnāthā temple. Originally, the *bhitti* of the Rāma temple was

also punctuated by recesses and returns like the last-mentioned shrine. Thus there is every possibility of its laterite-built *bhitti* having been replaced at a later date. The *adhishṭhāna* doubtless remains more or less the same, as can be averred by the occurrence of an inscription on the *jagatī*. Palaeographically, the inscription may be dated to the eleventh century and it registers the gift by one Śaṅkara : Kunṛappōḷaṅ of Muruga-nāḍu and Śiṁṇaṅ A. . . . ruling over Neḍumpuraiyūr for the burning of lamp and other expenses.¹ It appears that the local assembly consisting of the *ūr* and *poduvā* of Tiruppuraiyāru, the ancient name of Triprayar, was convened for the purpose of the first donor in his capacity as the *samaiṅṇita*.

Even in interior-arrangement, the temple is similar to the Vaḍakkunnātha temple. The outer circular wall encloses a miniature Drāviḍa-*vimāna* built on a square plan. It serves as the *garbha-griha* surrounded by two rows of columns—the first row having twenty-four and the inner row twelve. The *garbha-griha* has its own *adhishṭhāna* with the mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. Above the *bhitti* comes the octagonal *śikhara*. As already stated, fusion of the pure Drāviḍa element with the Kēraḷa style is the hall-mark of the Middle phase.

Peruvanam : Iraṭṭayappaṅ shrine

(Pls. XXVII B and XXIX B; fig. 10)

The Peruvanam temple-complex of Cherpu village, in Trichur Taluk, of District Trichur, has two main shrines—the Māḍattilappaṅ and Iraṭṭayappaṅ. As the Māḍattilappaṅ shrine has already been described under square *vimānas*, we will confine our attention only to the Iraṭṭayappaṅ shrine raised on a circular plan. It is an *ekatala-vimāna* built on a granite *adhishṭhāna*, the mouldings of which consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*. The *kaṇṭha* has *gala-pādas* alternating with floral designs, similar to that of the Vaḍakkunnātha of Trichur or Rāma temple of Triprayar. Below the *adhishṭhāna* lies the *padma-pādukā*, an optional member. The *vēdikā* too is decorated with rail-pattern and floral design. Occupying the entire part of the *adhishṭhāna* above the *kumuda* is sheltered the *simha-head* holding the fluted *praṇāla*. It ends in *gō-mukha*, and has circular bands of pearl-strings, creepers etc. The part where the *praṇāla* rests on the *kumuda* is square in section instead of *vṛitta*. As usual, the *kapōta* of the *adhishṭhāna* is decorated with *nāsikās*, some of them enclosing seated figures of some female deities in *ardha-paryāṅka* pose. Delineation of *nāsikās* and reliefs inside them follow clearly the Chōḷa idiom of the eleventh century. Even the standing *bhūta* figure below the *praṇāla* reflects Chōḷa plastic tradition; here it is in the pose of drinking water from a bowl.

The *bhitti* is made of laterite blocks, duly plastered and pierced on three sides by doors. Like the Vaḍakkunnātha temple its main entrance is from the west, the eastern one leading to the Pārvatī image, installed behind the *garbha-griha*. A pair of flights of steps meet at a common landing to form the *sōpāna*, screened by a carved *phalaka*, in front of the western

¹Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1970-71, no. 74.

entrance. The only *ghana-dvāra* is towards the north, just above the *praṇāla*. Other wall ornamentations include *kuḍya-stambhas*, *makara-tōraṇa* over the *ghana-dvāra*, *jālaka-pañjara*, cut into the *vēdī*, between the ornate pilasters. *Pōtikās* are of the bevelled variety. In some period, the entire wall was covered with murals, and also encircled simultaneously by beautiful wooden bracket figures.

It is a *sāndhāra-vimāna* housing a miniature *Drāviḍa-vimāna* in the centre. Square on plan, it has an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara* and perhaps also a *stūpī*. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampa* and *paṭṭikā*, followed by *vēdī* having no *pādas* at all. Two *liṅgas* are enshrined in the miniature shrine, serving as the *garbha-griha*. Along the *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* have been laid two rows of columns, the inner row having twelve and the outer row sixteen. Walls of the square *Drāviḍa-vimāna* have three *ghana-dvāras* besides the *kuḍya-stambhas*.

There is a *namaskāra-māṇḍapa*, in front, built on a square base. It has two concentric rows of pillars—four in the centre and twelve along the periphery. The granite *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. Its pyramidal roof, like the conical roof of the main shrine, is covered with copper sheets.

As the temple is very similar to the *Vaḍakkunnātha* temple at Trichur and the *Rāma* temple at Triprayar, each associated with an inscription of the eleventh century, it may likewise be dated to the same period. Thus both *Māḍattilappaṇ* and *Iraṭṭayappaṇ* shrines came up at one and the same time. These two shrines apart, there is a flat-roofed structure, comparable to the *Gaṇapati* shrine of the *Vaḍakkunnātha* temple-complex; it is used at present as the treasure-room. A small shrine, virtually forming part of the *nālam-balam*, is dedicated, as local legends say, to *Puru-Maharshi*, who is said to have set up a *liṅga* on the branch of a tree. *Peruvanam*, according to the same legend, is derived from the name of this sage but another tradition takes the name in the sense of a big forest.

Tirunillai: Śiva temple

(Pls. XXXVII A and XL B; figs. 9 and 47)

The *Śiva* temple at Tirunillai, a suburb of Palghat town, in District Palghat, is practically in ruins. At present, it includes a circular *Śiva* temple and a square *Vishṇu* shrine, both facing the east. The *nālam-balam* made of laterite blocks, has crumbled down in spite of the fact that its granite *upapīṭha* is fairly intact. Some slabs arranged in the form of a rectangle, with a *nandī* in the centre, may indicate the presence of the *namaskāra-māṇḍapa*. But there is a possibility of the improvised *māṇḍapa* and the *Vishṇu* shrine coming into existence in subsequent times. Only the western wall of the *Vishṇu* shrine remains unaltered, the rest having been rebuilt a few years back. From its very appearance the *Śiva* temple engages one's attention as a structure still retaining its old form. Ruined conditions of the shrine offers, at the same time, an opportunity to study clearly the interior of the temple.

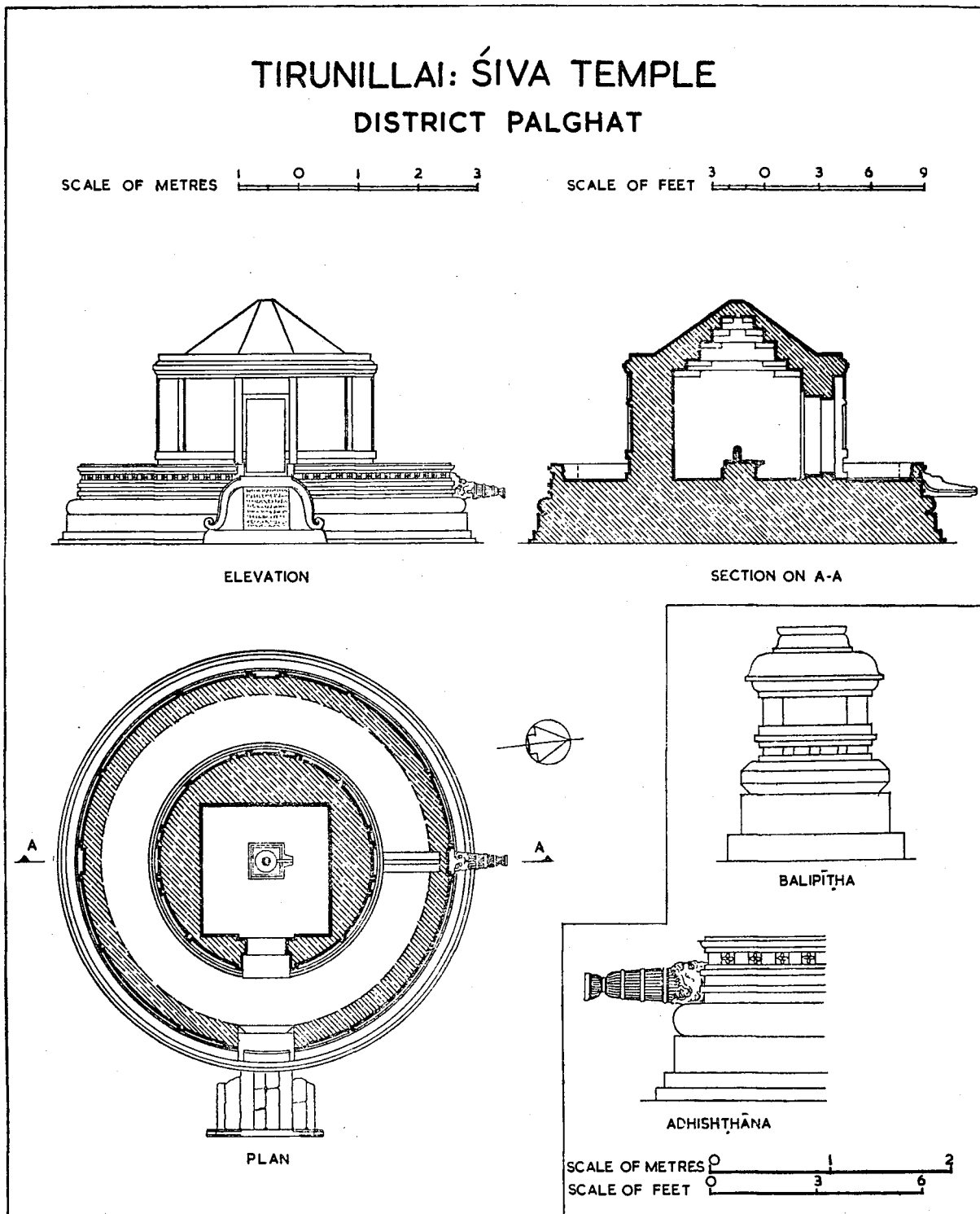


FIG. 47

The circular outer wall, with a diameter of 23 ft 11 in (7.29 m) encloses a circular *garbha-griha*, made of bricks. It is thus a *sāndhāra* temple with a paved circumambulatory passage, but without any column around the *garbha-griha*. The *bāhya-bhitti* of the shrine is now represented only by its granite *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vr̥tta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampha*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. In the *vēdī*, that rises above it, is to be seen floral design alternating with *pādas*. Mouldings above the *kumuda* barely show any projection. The *praṇāla* rests on the square-sectioned part of the *kumuda* and occupies practically the entire height from the *kumuda* to the *vēdī*. There are grooves as well for fixing the *simha-mukha* with the *adhishṭhāna*. It may be mentioned here that the *vr̥tta-kumuda* in front of the entrance is also square in section. Now, the *praṇāla* is in the form of *simha-mukha* issuing out the fluted *śuṇḍu*, virtually enclosing the *ambu-mārga*. It has three ornamental bands and a tapering profile.

As the *bāhya-bhitti* has fallen down, one can have a clear view of the inner shrine or *garbha-griha*. Though it is circular externally, it has been transformed into a square inside. Its ceiling is stone-built and is made of stepped arches; externally it takes the shape of a dome. The stone ceiling has been made of three tiers, achieved by means of corbelling. In the interior, the slabs have been placed in such a way so as to form at first a square and then an octagon. The centre is closed by a slab, carved with a lotus medallion. Perhaps this type of ceiling-construction appeared in Kerala architecture in the Middle phase and, that too, inspired by the Chālukyan tradition, for it is generally absent even in the later Chōḷa architecture of lower Drāviḍa-dēśa.

The entrance into the *garbha-griha* is from the east through a door which has a lotus-medallion on the granite door-sill; but its *lalāṭa-bimba* is free from any carving. Even the stone door-jambs of the *bāhya-bhitti* bear two lotus medallions, while the door-sill shows a lotus in the centre and at two corners. Both the inner and outer walls had three *ghana-dvāras*: one of the *ghana-dvāras* of the circular *garbha-griha* has a *mayūra-tōraṇa* on top. The *ghana-dvāras* apart, the circular brick-wall of the inner shrine is relieved with twelve thin pilasters standing on an incipient *adhishṭhāna*, indicated by three projections of varying degrees. Some sort of a *kapōta* and *valabhī* too can be noticed on the entablature part of the shrine. Over it, rises the octagonal *śikhara* without a defined *grīvā*: it must have been pinnacled originally by a *stūpī*. It is, therefore, certain that the inner shrine is a Drāviḍa-*vimana* built in brick. Inside the *garbha-griha* is enshrined a *linga* on a granite *pīṭha*, which shows the mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kamphas* and *paṭṭikā*.

The temple has its original flights of steps, with the banister screening them, still undisturbed. In the central part of the *phalaka* is engraved a Vaṭṭeluttu inscription of the twentieth regnal year of a Chēra king recording some provision for food-offering to the deity;¹ a body called *nārpattenṇāyiravar* is also mentioned in connexion with this donation. The inscription has been dated palaeographically to the twelfth century, and following the evidence the temple may reasonably be dated to the first half of the same century.

¹ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1960-61, no. 241.

Venganellur: Tiruvembilappan temple

(pl. LV B; figs. 13 and 48)

The Tiruvembilappan temple at Venganellur, in Talapilli Taluk, District Trichur, is associated with a twelfth century inscription.¹ On plan also it bears similarity with the circular temple of the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. The temple consists of a circular shrine carrying a tiled conical roof, and a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, both being surrounded by a *nāmbalam*. Facing the east, the temple is not only a *sāndhāra-vimāna* but also a *sarvatō-bhadra* temple, with four openings on the four directions. The main entrance on the east is through a flight of steps flanked on either side by *hasti-hastas*, bearing the representation of *tōraṇa*: the *sōpāna*, like the *adhishṭhāna* and *praṇāla*, is built of granite. Its *bhitti* is made of laterite blocks and relieved mainly with *kuḍya-stambhas*, besides the doors on the four sides. There are niches also but they rise as if from the *ṛitta-kumuda*. The *adhishṭhāna* mouldings

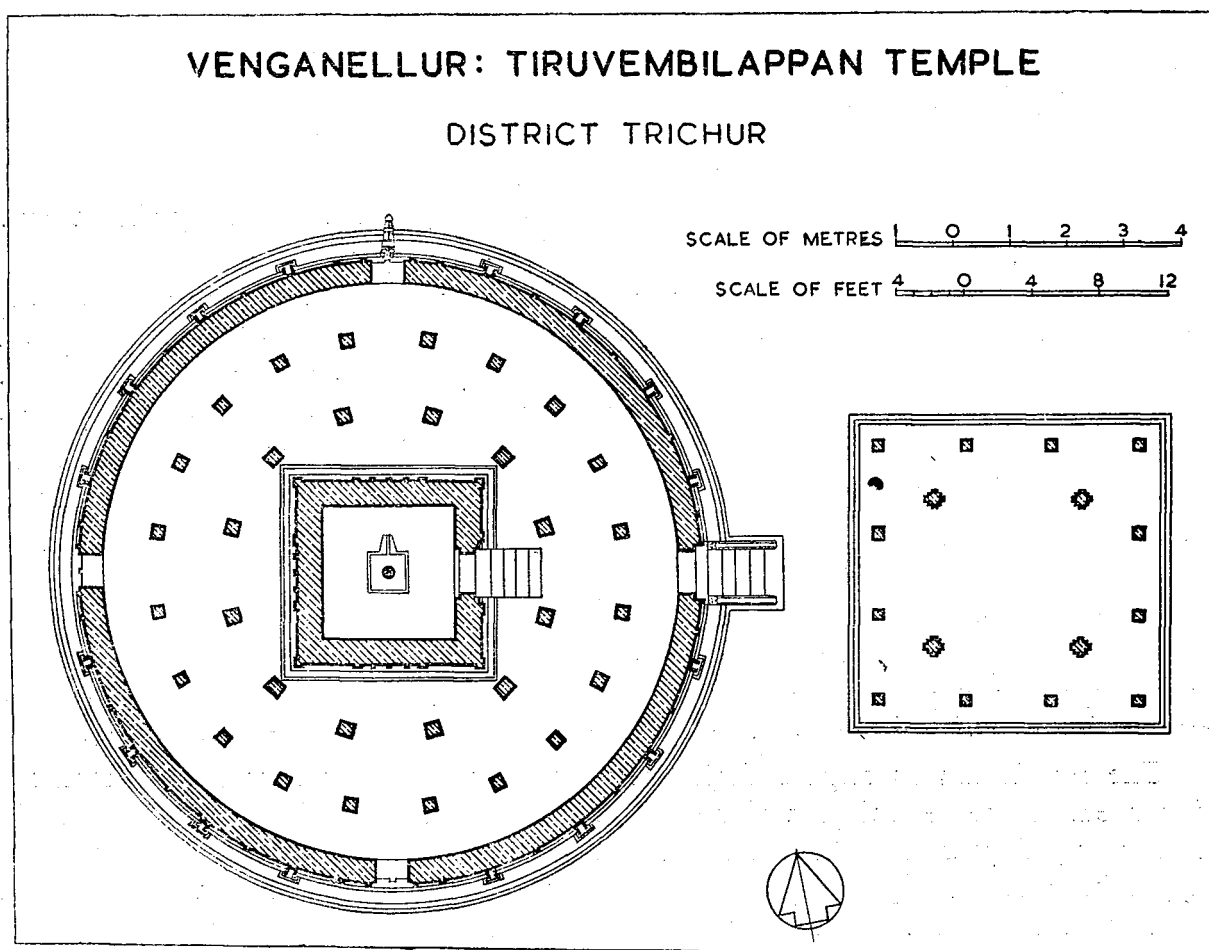


FIG. 48

¹ *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1966*, no. 68.

comprise *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. Its *vēdī* has *pādas* alternating with floral designs.

The *garbha-griha* in the form of a miniature Drāviḍa shrine, raised on a square plan,¹ is built partly of granite and partly of laterite. Its *adhishṭhāna* is composed of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas*, *kamṭa*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*, followed by *vēdī*. Even its *bhitti* has *ghana-dvāras*, with a *makara-tōraṇa* above, and *kuḍya-stambha*, the latter associated with bevelled type of *pōtikās*. Of the members of the *prastara*, the *kapōta* decorated with *kūḍus* at regular interval, is the most prominent of all. Another noteworthy feature is the presence of a flight of five steps leading to the miniature *vimāna*. Above its *prastara* comes the octagonal *grīvā*, followed by octagonal *śikhara*. Two rows of wooden columns, having square *śadurams* and octagonal *kaṭṭu* in succession, encircle the *garbha-griha*. There are twenty and twelve pillars in the outer and inner rows respectively. In spite of the occurrence of so many columns the circumambulatory path looks quite spacious.

There is a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front carrying a tiled pyramidal roof. Its wooden pillars—four in the centre and twelve at the periphery—and the carved wooden ceiling exhibits high quality of wood-work. This is evident also from the wood-sculptures and other decorative motifs in the *vādil-maḍam*, specially of its overdoor. It is, however, built on a granite *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *kaṇṭha*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with floral pattern alternating with *pādas*. The same type of *adhishṭhāna* has also been employed for the *nālabalam*.

Udayamperur: Peruntirukkōyil

(Figs. 9 and 49)

The Peruntirukkōyil, at the historic place of Udayamperur, in Kanayannur Taluk, of District Ernakulam, is by far the biggest circular shrine of Kerala. Udayamperur is derived from 'Udiyaṇ-perūr', meaning the village of the Udiyaṇ or the Chēras. Anyway the temple is a Śiva shrine of Peruntirukkōyilappaṇ associated with two early inscriptions, engraved in the characters of the twelfth or the thirteenth century. Both the inscriptions are damaged but they seem to record a gift of land to the temple for a perpetual lamp and food-offerings. The third inscription, incised on the *adhishṭhāna* of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* is well-preserved and belongs to the Travancore ruler Śrī Vira Kōdai-Ravivarmaṇ Kīlapperūr.²

The temple-complex, facing east, consists of the circular temple, with a gigantic conical roof, covered with copper sheets, and a square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, with a copper roof. It is the last-mentioned unit that provides the indubitable evidence of its coming into being

¹ Its plan based on wrong measurements supplied by the *purohita* was published in *Indian Archaeology-A Review* 1969-70, p. 88. The present drawing is more authentic as the measurements have been checked and verified by more than one person.

² *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, pp. 63-65.

at a later date. In the original layout of the temple-complex, it had no place at all. The inscription here says that, 'This auspicious *maṇḍapa* from the base to the top (*stūpi*) was erected by Nārāyaṇa-Ravi of Punneriṭṭa, on the order of (the Travancore king) Vēṇāṭṭaḍigaḷ of Śrī Vira Kōdai Ravivarma Kīḷapperūr.' The inscription may be dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century,¹ when the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* was added to this temple. Its *adhishṭhāna* mouldings comprise *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*.

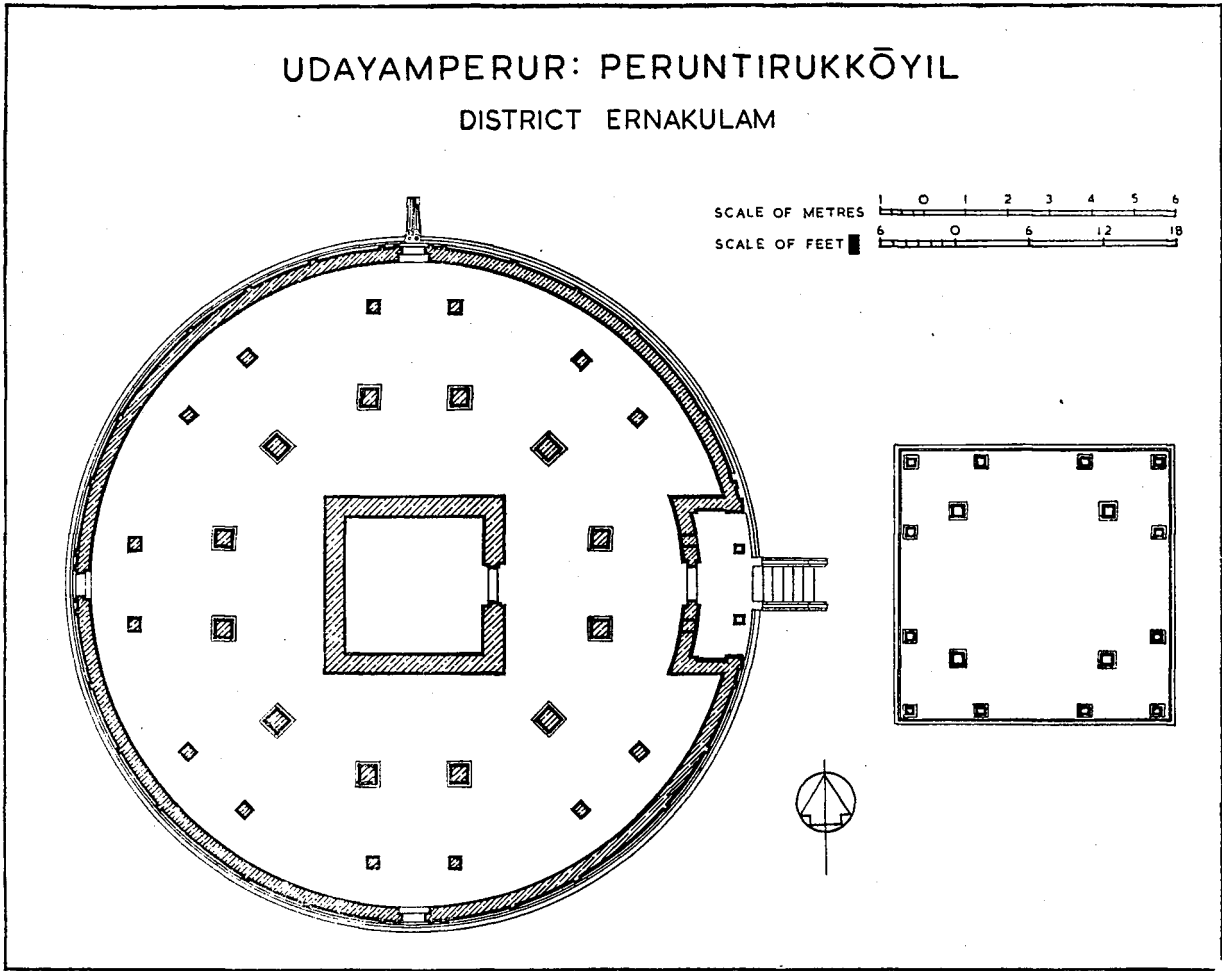


FIG. 49

The main temple, girt as usual by a *nāḷambalam* and a *prākāra* wall, might have come into existence by the twelfth century. Its wall appears to be a recent construction. But the *adhishṭhāna* made of granite is an original one, and its mouldings show *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛittakumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *pādas*, *valabhī*, *kapōta* and *prati*. It is surmounted, as usual, by a *vēdikā*,

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VI, pp. 63-65.

above which rises the plain wall, bearing only pilasters. But the *bhitti* has four openings characteristic of the *sarvatōbhadrā* class of *vimānas*. The main entrance is through a flight of steps flanked by *hasti-hasta* banisters bearing *pūrṇa-kumbha* motif. It leads to a porch formed by shifting back the main wall to some extent, a construction widely followed perhaps in the next phase. On either side of the *sōpāna* is a column. The *dvāra-pālas* are near the door leading to the interior of the shrine. The *pranāla* on the north comes out of the *kapōta* and exhibits early features; the fluted shaft without any ornamental bands has a lipped end. Its *ambu-mārga* is in the shape of an open channel. A *bhūta*-figure, in standing posture, holds the curved end of the *nāla*.

The shrine-interior is interesting in that it houses a miniature Drāviḍa-*vimāna*, square on plan. Its back part is meant to enshrine Pārvatī, facing the west. The square *vimāna* stands on an *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with dentils, and *paṭṭikā*. Its walls are plain but *prastara* is represented, apart from the *kapōta*, by two successive mouldings, one of them showing a dentil course. The centre of each wall is marked by a *ghana-dvāra*. Its *grīvā* and *śikhara* are *aśṭāśra* but *stūpī* could not be seen. Another flight of six steps leads to the interior of the *garbhā-griha* in the form of a Drāviḍa-*vimāna*: it is flanked by simple *phalaka*. All round the square shrine have been laid two rows of pillars in circular alignment, the inner and the outer rows consisting of twelve and fourteen pillars respectively. Pillars are alternately square and octagonal in section. The inner shrine is possibly built of laterite.

Nemam: Nīramaṅkara temple

(Pls. XXXVII B, XLIC and XLVIII A; figs. 9, 15 and 50)

The Nīramaṅkara temple at Nemam, near Trivandrum, is famous for the Viṣṇu image that is enshrined in a subsidiary structure of recent origin. However, the structural complex is in ruins but like the Śiva temple at Tirunillai, near Palghat, it offers an opportunity to have a closer view of the shrine-interior of a Kerala style of temple. The temple faces the east, and is without its superstructure; even the *nālabalam* has fallen down. Its *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* is represented by the granite base; in conformity with the architectural usage of south Kerala its *adhishṭhāna* is of the *mañchaka* type. Actually there was hardly any reason to provide it with an *adhishṭhāna* if its purpose was to shelter the votaries. As the idea of *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* has been derived from the *nandī-maṇḍapa*—in many instances it enshrines a figure of *nandī* too—the older legacy of providing it with an *adhishṭhāna* continued throughout Kerala, except perhaps in the Districts of Trivandrum and Quilon.

The circular temple is built entirely of granite, a building material that had a wider use in the southern districts like Quilon and Trivandrum than in other parts. This may be due to the influence of the Tamil tradition, in which granite played invariably a dominant role. Even in the choice of the *adhishṭhāna* of the temple, one may easily discern the same trend: the mouldings comprise *upāna*, now practically submerged, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *gala-pādas*, and *paṭṭikā*. Above the *adhishṭhāna*

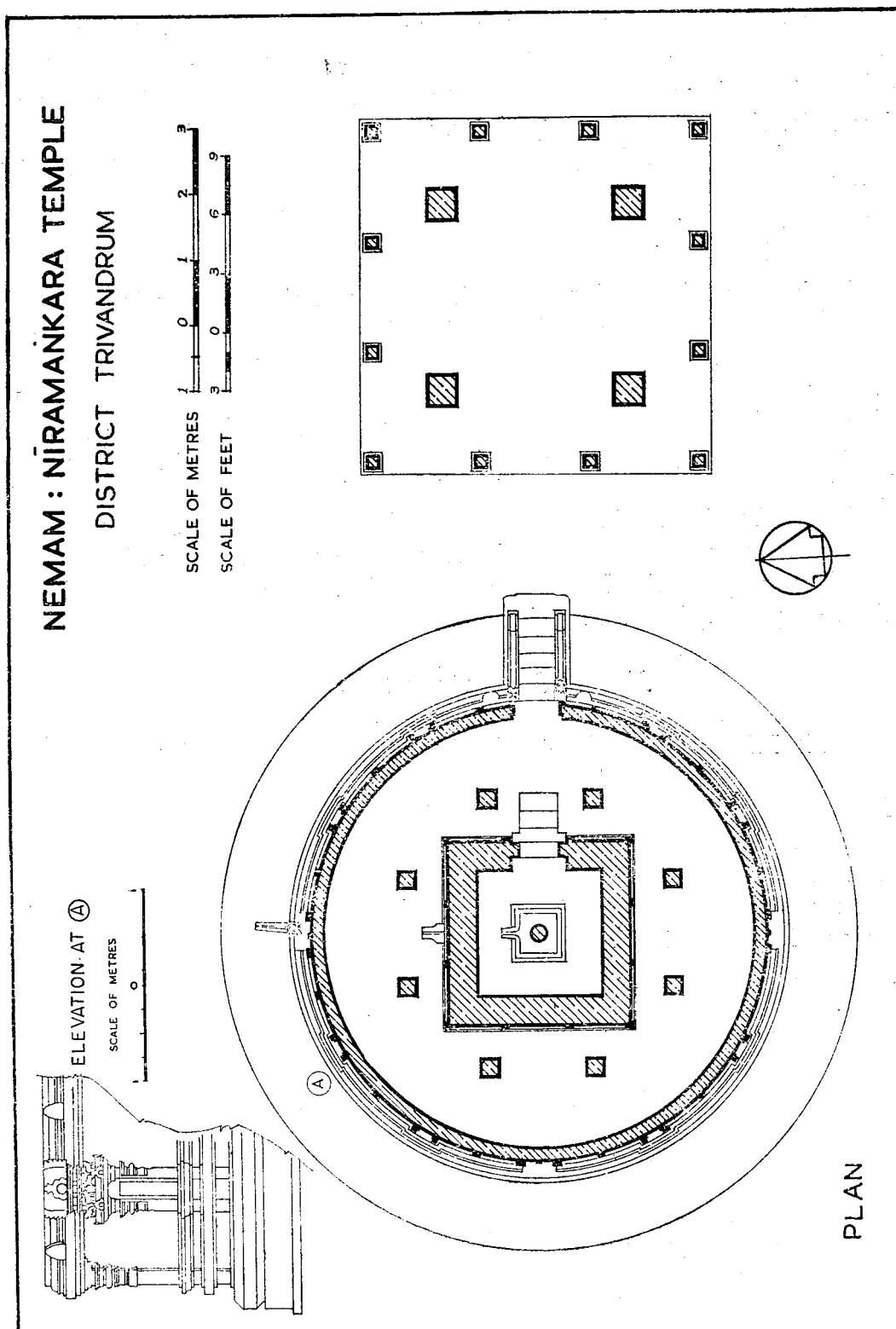


Fig. 50

has been raised the *vēdikā* whose *pādas* are common with those of the *kaṇṭha*. The *bhitti* in relation to the *adhishṭhāna* appears shorter in height, and it is embellished with tetragonal *kuḍya-stambhas*, some sort of *kōshṭha-pañjara* and *ghana-dvāras* with *śālā-śikhara*s. As the conical roof of the temple is completely missing, the structure is preserved only up to *kapōta*, a simple moulding with stylized *kūḍus*. Its *sōpāna*, with simple *phalakas* as banisters, and the *praṇāla* are also of granite. The *praṇāla* is very similar to those of the Great temples of Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram; hence, may be ascribed to the eleventh century. Issuing out from the *paṭṭikā* of the *adhishṭhāna*, it is in the shape of a channelled stone with bevelled and lipped end. However, it comes out of the *śimha*'s mouth, and a seated female figure has been placed below. This is rather an unusual practice. Moreover, it is not in the pose of holding or carrying the *praṇāla*, as is customary with such figures all over Kerala. Most likely it belongs to some panel, maybe a *Mātrikā* panel. But certainly it does not belong to the one in which Brāhmī, referred to before (p. 106), figured.

Now about the inner shrine or the *garbha-griha*. It is square on plan but *grīvā* and *śikhara*, made of bricks, are *ashtāśra* in form. The *śikhara* has *nāsikās* enclosing human face on all the eight sides. It is an *alpa-vimāna* but with all the six parts, of which *adhishṭhāna* and *bhitti* are definitely of laterite. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. Walls are relieved with *kuḍya-stambhas*, carrying bevelled *pōtikās*, the corner ones having four-armed corbels. Above the *bhitti* rises a well-defined *prastara* comprising, in successive order, *uttara* and *vājana*, both represented by blocking courses, *valabhī* with row of *lupā*-ends, *kapōta* decorated with *kūḍus*, *ālīṅga* and *antarī*, again decorated with *lūpa*-ends or a dentil course. At present, its *stūpī* is missing.

It has been stated earlier that the temple-site is associated with an image of Brāhmī that may easily be dated to the early ninth century. But structurally the present temple cannot be dated earlier than the eleventh century. Even the Vishṇu image has to be dated anterior, by at least a century, to the present circular shrine.

Punalur: Śrī Trikōtēśvara Mahādēva temple

(Pls. XLIV B and XLV; figs. 9, 15 and 17)

Śrī Trikōtēśvara Mahādēva temple at Punalur, in Pattanapuram Taluk, District Quilon, is situated in a beautiful spot on the bank of the Kallada river. It is a small, compact unit consisting of a circular shrine, a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, a small Gaṇapati shrine, all enclosed by a *nālambalam*, besides a Vishṇu shrine to the north-west corner of the *nālambalam*. But for the superstructure, all the edifices here have been built of granite, a building material commonly used in the temple-architecture of the District Quilon. The temple has to be dated not later than the first quarter of the thirteenth century, as an inscription on the *balipīṭha* provides A.D. 1245-46 as the date of the latter's construction. According to this Tamiḻ inscription engraved in Vaṭṭeḷuttu characters on the *balipīṭha* itself one Chakrāyudaṇ Mārttāṇḍaṇ was responsible for the construction of the *balipīṭha* in

Kollam 421.¹ It thus presupposes the existence of the temple even before the gift of the inscribed *balipīṭha*.

Here each structural unit has a distinctive *adhishṭhāna*, made of fine-grained granite. The *nālabalam* has a *mañcha* type of base, while the *adhishṭhāna* of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* consists of *upāna*, short *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. Standing on four stone-columns, with wooden corbels displaying *pushpa-pōtikā*, the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* has a tiled pyramidal roof. The *adhishṭhāna* of the main circular shrine is quite elaborate compared to the other bases here. Of course, such an *adhishṭhāna* is very common in the contemporary temple-architecture of the Tamil country. Its mouldings, apart from the *padmas* as the *upapīṭha*, consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛtta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *simha-mālā* and *paṭṭikā*. The *vēdī* that follows the *adhishṭhāna* shows floral designs alternating with the *pādas* or the rail-pattern. The *padma* below the *adhishṭhāna* is an optional member and, according to the *Vāstu-sāstras*, is exclusive of the total height of the temple. Both *adho* - as well as *ūrdhva-padma* have been delineated following the architectural tradition of the Chōḷas. The square Viṣṇu shrine, with a circular *śikhara*, has its *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *pādas* and floral motifs and *paṭṭikā*.

The principal circular shrine, facing east, is an example of *kshudra-vimāna*, having a conical roof covered with copper. It has two doors; the eastern one, with *hastihasta* banisters, leads to the *garbha-griha*. One of the banisters is beautifully carved with seated figure of eight-armed Śiva and *nandī* on one side; the other banister bears the relief of an eight-armed Bhagavatī. There are two *dvāra-pālas* standing in their stereotyped poses. Equally interesting is the figure of the dwarf carved on the slab carrying the *praṇāla* which is a fluted shaft with simple bands. The *ambu-mārga*, runs through the circular shaft, open on the upper side. As is customary, it is held in the mouth of the *simha* occupying the *kaṇṭha* of the *adhishṭhāna*. It ends into *simha-mukha* instead of *gō-mukha*. The *bhūta* figure carved on the stone is in relief; it carries *paraśu* on the right hand and *śūla* on the left.

The inner shrine or the *garbha-griha* is square on plan, its *grīvā* and *śikhara* being octagonal. A circumambulatory passage runs round it, and there are two pillars on each side, making a total of eight. These pillars carry the full weight of the wooden frame of the conical roof. In the centre of the *garbha-griha* is a Śiva-*līṅga*, planted on a square *pīṭha*. Though the temple has a western entrance, no image can be seen installed at the back of the square inner shrine.

To the north-east corner of the main shrine is the Viṣṇu temple of the pure Drāviḍa Order. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with *gala-pādas* and floral designs and *paṭṭikā*. On each of the four corners of the temple is placed a column; and the entire structure is finally enclosed in a rectangular temple following the practice of building Kerala type of *sāndhāra-vimānas*. It has its own *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* as well. This type of subsidiary shrine can be seen in the Vaḍakkunnātha temple-complex, wherein the small Kṛishṇa shrine has been raised at the back of the *kūttambalam*.

¹Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1962-63, no. B. 326.

Built inside a rectangular structure, the small shrine, facing the east, has octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*. On the other hand, the Viṣṇu shrine at Punalur has the circular *śikhara*, which is indeed an uncommon feature in the temple-architecture of Kerala.

4. APSIDAL SHRINE

A. DRĀVIDA-KĒRAḶA

(i) GENERAL

It will be evident from Table III (p. 185) that the apsidal temples of Kerala clearly fall into three broad divisions so far as their dimensions are concerned. Temples of the Early phase vary in length from 7.04 m to 8.84 m, the average being 8.0 m; in breadth, they range from 4.39 m to 6.02 m, with an average of 5.42 m. Their breadth/length proportion naturally varies from 1:1.3 to 1:1.7. Temples from Kizhavellur, Mangalapadi, Nedumpura and Payyanur, with their length varying from 14.25 m to 15.60 m., constitute the second group. The breadth of these temples range from 9.91 m to 11.73 m, their average length and breadth being 14.82 m and 10.44 m respectively. Only one temple among the group does not conform to the average, and that temple is the Subrahmaṇya temple at Payyannur. Yet, the breadth/length proportion of all the three temples, barring the Payyannur temple, is 1:1.4; the last-mentioned example has the proportion of 1:1.3. Stylistically these temples, except the one at Payyannur, which is decidedly a late structure, are ascribable to the Middle phase. Temples from Chennamangalam, Panjal and Trichur form the group of small apsidal shrines—the smallest example being the Kunnatali Śiva temple at Chennamangalam measuring 2.95 m x 2.96 m. Its length is slightly shorter than the breadth, and is clearly an example of semi-circular temple having a breadth/length proportion of 1:1. The averages of the length and breadth of the other two examples are respectively 4.57 m and 3.23 m; their proportion comes to 1:1.4. Of all the apsidal shrines, the Mahāliṅgēśvara temple at Aduru is the biggest, its breadth/length proportion (1:1.6) is nearer to the early group. It is quite likely that the foundation of this temple, being close to Tuḷunāḍu, goes back to the early times. But in the present form it is difficult to place it before the Late phase. It brings us to another aspect of the problem: the problem of height in relation to the dimensions. As the temple was to be raised to the height of three *talas*, the necessity of increasing its dimensions was also felt. Without it a semi-circular temple with the height of three storeys would not have been architecturally impressive.

It is thus apparent that Kerala has not only small apsidal shrine (above, p. 185) but also the large-sized ones. Secondly, breadth/length proportion shows a tendency towards semi-circular form, another unique development in Kerala perhaps following the practice in the arrangement of the Durgā temple at Aihole. In other respects, specially in the development of shrine-interior, there is hardly any difference between the apsidal and circular temples. Into the apsidal temples, too, the idea of Drāviḍa-*vimāna* was interfused with the indigenous

style. The *garbha-griha* inside such temples is, in the form of an apsidal shrine, with *gajapriṣṭhākhāra śikhara*; there are sometimes columns also in the *pradakṣiṇā-pāṭha*. Some of the later *sāndhāra-vimānas* also belong to the *sarvatōbhadra* class of temples. Nevertheless, the small shrines as well as the early group are examples of *nirandhāra* temples, and generally without any columns inside. As a matter of fact, the most notable difference, in the interior-arrangement, between the apsidal shrines and the circular ones lies in the general absence of pillars in the former category.

The extant temples from Tiruvannur, Trikkandiyur and Triprangod, though their origin goes back to the Early period, belong mainly to the Middle phase. To this group may be added the temples from Kizhavellur, Panjal and Nedumpura. The antiquity of the last-mentioned temple cannot be questioned, specially from the epigraphical evidence. It may be recalled here that the Nityavichārēśvara temple or the Śiva temple at Tali has yielded inscriptions which refer to Nēḍumpuṛaiyūr-nāḍu. The inscription from the Rāma temple at Triprayar also mentions a person who was ruling over Nēḍumpuṛaiyūr. While the latter is dated to the eleventh century, the inscriptions from the former site belong possibly to the Early phase. Of course, the reference to Nēḍumpuṛaiyūr in the inscriptions of the tenth and eleventh centuries does not prove the ancient character of the present Śiva temple at Nedumpura. Yet the possibility of Nedumpura having a temple in the Early phase cannot also be ruled out. However, on the basis of the architectural remnants, that escaped the ravages of time and unimaginative renovation, we may certainly place it in the Middle phase. The small Ayyapaṇ temple at Panjal has also been placed in this phase purely on circumstantial evidence. An inscription engraved on its *kumuda*-moulding has not yet been deciphered; the wooden grill surrounding the entire structure has also made it difficult to take the impression of the said epigraph.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Kizhavellur: Vāmana temple

(Pls. XLIII B and XLIV A; fig. 51)

Though spoilt by the renovation of 1952, the Vāmana temple at Kizhavellur, in Vaikam Taluk, District Kottayam, still retains certain features which may be ascribed to the Middle phase. Built fully of laterite, the apsidal temple, shorn of all its splendour, is located on an elevated ground, thus occupying a commanding position. It is associated with an inscription dated to Kali-yuga 1510707th day, equivalent to A.D. 1035, March 22.¹ No doubt it is a fragmentary record but it records clearly the construction of the temple. It speaks of the construction of an *ambalam* in Tiruveḷḷūr, which may be the same as the present Veḷḷūr. The inscription ends with a benedictory verse in Sanskrit, written in Grantha characters, the other part being in Tamiḷ in Vaṭṭeḷutu script.

¹ Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1966-67, no. B. 66.

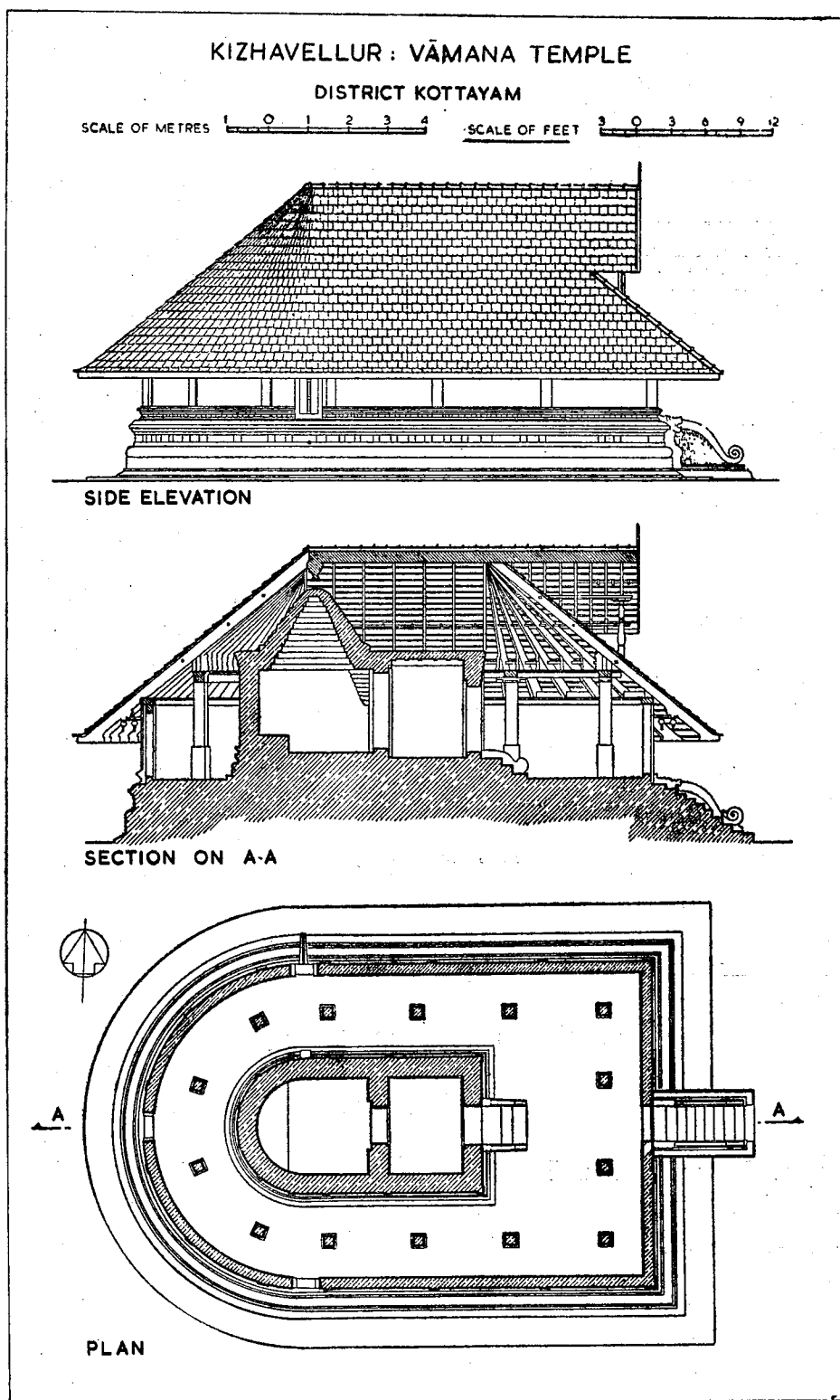


FIG. 51

The temple, facing east, has a *kapōta-bandha* type of *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *gala-pādas*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*. Below the *adhishṭhāna* is to be seen the *padma-pāduka*; the *vēdī* above the *adhishṭhāna* has also *pādas*. The wall is plain but for the three doors, thereby indicating its *sarvatōbhadrā* character. Its simple *praṇāla* comes out of the *kapōta* part of the *adhishṭhāna* near the northern door.

The Vāmana temple is an *ekatala-vimāna*, with a tiled *gaja-prishṭhākāra* superstructure. Inside the temple is housed an apsidal *garbha-griha* having a tall circular dome over the apse. It has its own *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. Divided into sanctum proper and the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the *garbha-griha* is surrounded by a row of fourteen columns along the *pradakṣiṇā-patha*. But the *bāhya-bhitti* as well as the *garbha-griha* wall do not show these divisions on the exterior. Columns inside are not of uniform type, and perhaps most of them were replaced by new ones at the time of the renovation. This is evident from the pillars in front of the main entrance, as one of them is carved with a figure of *dīpa-lakṣmī* and the other bearing the relief of Gaṇēśa. The *garbha-griha*, too, has *hastihasta* banister on either side of the flight of steps.

Entrance into the *mukha-maṇḍapa* of the temple is through a flight of nine steps, flanked on either side by banister of the *hasti-hasta* type. Both the granite *phalakas* are carved with fine reliefs of deities ascribable to the Late phase: one of them portrays a dancing Śiva accompanied by other deities including Gaṇēśa, seated to his right. Apasmāra-puruṣa has duly been shown in the relief in the posture of being trampled down by Śiva. The other *phalaka*, on the northern side, has been carved with a four-armed *sthānaka* image of Viṣṇu, accompanied by Śrī-Dēvī and Bhū-Dēvī. Originally, the main entrance had wooden *dvāra-pālas*, now damaged and removed from the actual position. An interesting feature of the temple-complex is the absence of *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*: the space between the *nālambalam* and the flight of steps is too narrow to accommodate this characteristic pyramidal structure. On the contrary, the granite *balipīṭha* is an impressive unit having the mouldings like the *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with *gala-pādas* and *makara-terminals*, and *paṭṭikā*; it is followed by *vēdī*.

Panjal: Śrī Ayyappaṅkāvu temple

(Figs. 9 and 52)

Śrī Ayyappaṅkāvu temple at Panjal, in Talapilli Taluk, of District Trichur, is a small *nirandhāra* temple built on an apsidal plan. Facing the east, its granite *adhishṭhāna* has the usual mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with *makara-terminals* and *paṭṭikā*; it is followed by the *vēdikā* as well. It seems that the parts of the *adhishṭhāna* above the *kumuda*, which contains an inscription, and the *bhitti* are later reconstruction. The *bhitti* is, however, made of laterite blocks, duly plastered, and also painted with murals. Themes of the paintings include dancing Śiva, Gaṇēśa, Harihara, Bhagavatī, Vēṇugōpāla, Narasimha tearing the entrails of Hiraṇyakaśipu, Kāliyamardana, Rāma and his brothers, Rāma's coronation, and Sītā and Hanumān. To the north of the Ayyappaṅkāvu temple, which carries a tiled

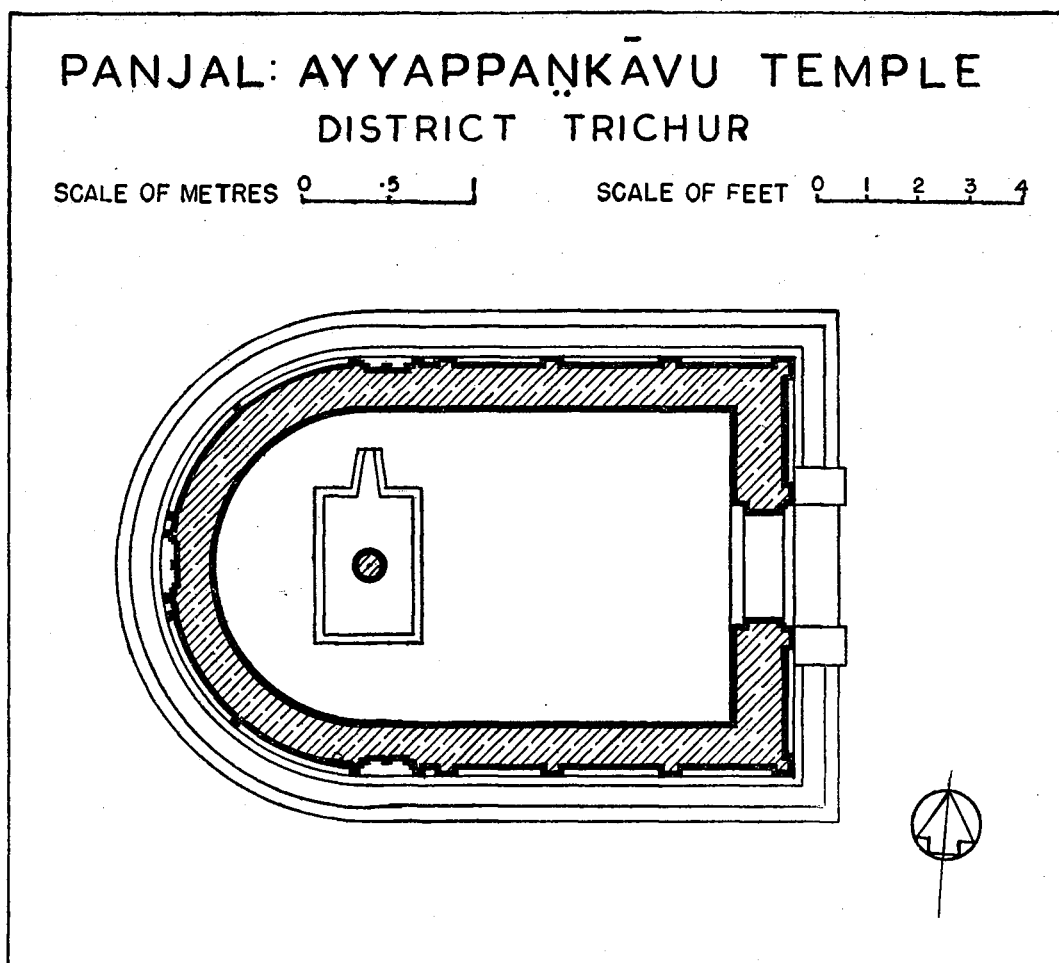


FIG. 52

gaja-prishṭha roof, stands another small shrine, square on plan, dedicated to Viṣṇu. It faces the east and is made entirely of laterite blocks. As stated earlier, the temple-complex has no datable feature preserved in its architecture, save the inscribed *kumuda*. Palaeographically, it may be ascribed to the Middle phase; its breadth/length ratio also appears to be the characteristic of the same period. The temple is without a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*.

Nedumpura: Śiva temple

(Pl. XLVI; figs. 10 and 53)

The Śiva temple at Nedumpura, in Talapilli Taluk, of District Trichur, is not very far away from the Panjal temple described above. Nedumpura is also known as Kulaśēkhara-nēllur, though in the inscription, as stated above, the place is called Neḍumpuṛaiyūr. Its early date is confirmed not only by epigraphical evidence but also by a few surviving

architectural features of the temple. No inscription is known to have been discovered so far from the Nedumpura temple. But testimony of inscriptions from Tali and Triprayar leave no doubt about its importance as the headquarters of a small principality. It is but natural that such a township should have had a temple as a centre of its cultural life.

It is a fairly big temple-complex comprising, apart from the main sanctuary, the shrines for Viṣṇu on the north-west corner, Śāstā on the south-west corner of the Viṣṇu shrine, Bhagavatī on the south-eastern, and Gaṇēśa on the south-western side of the principal Śiva temple. All the subsidiary shrines, specially the Viṣṇu temple, has undergone thorough renovation some eighty years ago. This was the time when the main temple, too, passed through a major phase of repairs. All the temples, except the main Śiva temple, are square on plan.

The principal shrine is an example of *dvitala sāndhāra-vimāna*, facing the east. Its *adhishṭhāna* is made of granite while the walls are of laterite blocks, both the roofs being covered with copper sheets, spread evidently over a timber-built frame. The *adhishṭhāna* has *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampa*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. From the *kaṇṭha* comes out the

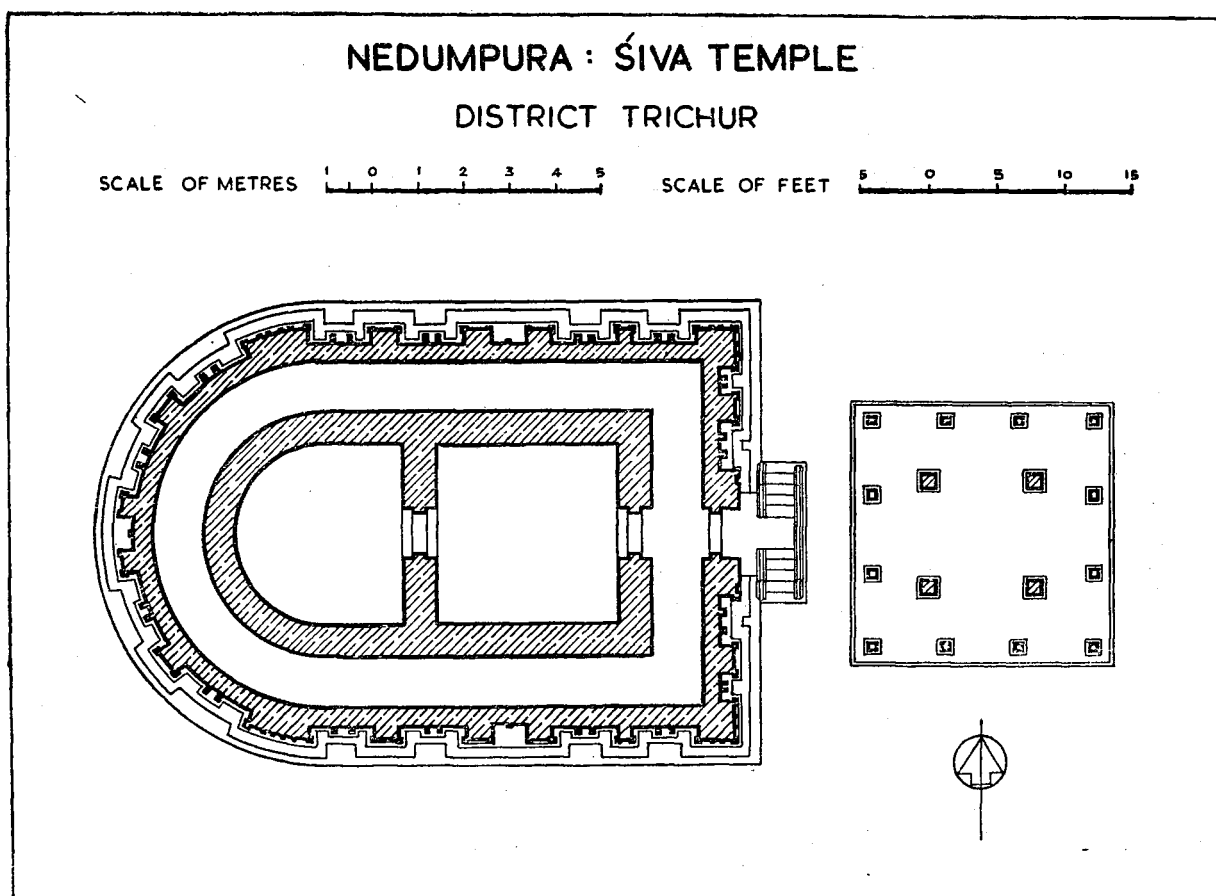


FIG. 53

praṇāla with simple flutings. As usual, it is held in the *śiṃha's* mouth, resting on the *kumuda*. Above the *adhishṭhāna*, rises the *vēdī* showing floral designs alternating with *pādas*. The upper *kaṇṭha* has highly stylized *makara* designs on either side of each projection. Both the *adhishṭhāna* and the *bhitti* have identical recesses and returns; perhaps originally these were connected even with the *hāras* above the *prastara*. The *hārāntaras* here contain *śālā-pañjaras*—*kōshṭhas* being of the usual sham variety. It is, however, difficult to say if these *kōshṭhas* were meant to be adorned with *jālakas*, as is the case with some temples still retaining the particular feature. These *pañjaras* are cut into the *vēdikā*, whereas the *tōraṇas* and *kuḍya-stambhas* rise from above the *vēdī*. Pilasters are of the tetragonal variety with corbels of the bevelled and tenon type. *Tōraṇas* have arches all over but its original form is difficult to visualize.

The *prastara* of the temple has also undergone considerable transformation. The *uttara* and the *vājana* are represented by plain courses but the *valabhī* might have had a row of *bhūtas*, now deformed by the successive layers of stucco. Similar deformation can be noticed also in the *kapōta*, adorned with *nāsikās*. The *hāra* above the *prastara* has likewise lost much of its true character, and the earlier features of the *grīvā* are beyond easy recognition.

The entrance into the temple is through two lateral flights of five steps meeting at a common landing; the slab that screens the *sōpāna* is carved with minor motifs like *kumbha*, *pushpa*, etc. Inside, the temple is divided into *garbha-griha* and *mukha-maṇḍapa* but without columns in front or along the *pradakṣhiṇā-patha*. The *garbha-griha* is also apsidal on plan but we are not certain if it carried a domical *śikhara*. It enshrines a cylindrical *līṅga*, placed on a square *līṅga-pīṭha*.

In front of the principal shrine has been built a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, the *adhishṭhāna*-mouldings of which comprise *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. The entire temple-complex is surrounded by a *nālambalam*, which has its own *adhishṭhāna*. It needs no mention that both the roofs are in the shape of *gaja-prishṭha*, the upper one pinnaced by three *stūpīs*.

Triprangod: Kālasamhāramūrti temple

(Pl. XIX B; figs. 8 and 32)

The Kālasamhāramūrti temple at Triprangod, in Tirur Taluk, District Malappuram, is a large temple-complex having no less than nine subsidiary shrines. It is a *dvitala-vimāna* and apsidal on plan from *adhishṭhāna* to *śikhara*; the upper roof is covered with copper and has three *stūpīs*, while the lower one is tiled. Its early phase, represented by the present *upapīṭha*, has already been described (p. 169) but the extant structure here falls largely in the Middle phase.

The granite *adhishṭhāna* of the temple consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. It is followed by *vēdī*, also of granite, showing floral design alternating with the *pādas*. The *praṇāla* issuing out of the *kaṇṭha* is now replaced by a new one. Neither the *adhishṭhāna* nor the *bhitti* exhibits any recessing; as a matter of fact, walls are

relieved only with pilasters and *ghana-dvāras*. However, the *valabhī* has the row of *bhūtas* running just above the corbels of the pilasters. The corbel is of the bevelled type, with projecting tenon. Its second storey, which is conterminous with the *grīvā*, has highly stylized *hāra* decoration.

In this apsidal temple may be noticed a few interesting variations not noticed in the Nedumpura temple. It is, like the Panjal temple, a *nirandhāra* shrine without any *pradakshiṇā-pāṭha* inside. Further, no columns have been provided in the interior despite the presence of peristyle around the present temple. The earlier socle thus provides an open-air *pradakshiṇā-pāṭha* all round the apsidal shrine. It is quite likely that the idea of peristyle might have been derived from the tradition then in vogue in Tuḷunāḍu. Another peculiarity of this temple is the indented ground-plan of its front part i.e., towards the west, its entrance being through a *sōpāna* having *hastī-hasta* banisters. Indentations of the front part simulate a cruciform plan, a unique feature of Kerala's temple-architecture. All this was absent in the temple of the Early phase datable to the tenth century. Most probably, the Middle phase of this temple-construction may be ascribed to the twelfth century on stylistic grounds.

Internally, the temple is divided into two parts, apsidal *garbha-griha* and an oblong *mukha-maṇḍapa*. This very division is present on the exterior as well. A narrow entrance marks the separation between the two units, devoid of any pillar in the interior.

The temple has a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front standing on a granite base, the mouldings of which consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. Its pyramidal roof stands on four inner and twelve outer columns. Interestingly, the south-western and the south-eastern corners of the *maṇḍapa* have been converted into two subsidiary shrines dedicated to Gaṇapati and Nannēśvara. No *nandī* figure could be noticed here, but a *nandī* in half-buried condition is to be seen outside the temple on the north-eastern corner. Abutting the southern wall of the principal shrine also stands a small shrine, perhaps meant for Chaṇḍēśa. Being a very large structural complex, it is associated with a tank, and on the western side, two *gōpuras*, built of laterite blocks. The base of the old *nāḷambalam* shows mouldings like *upāna*, short *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*.

It is necessary to add a few words about the subsidiary shrines that stand outside the inner complex: these comprise a Śāstā temple to the south and six other shrines to the north. The Śāstā temple is apsidal on plan and is built of laterite blocks. Of the six shrines, all of them being of Śaiva affiliation, the northernmost one is the most impressive. It is a *sama-chaturāśra dvīṭala-vīmāna* standing on a granite *adhishṭhāna*, with mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. Its walls are decorated with *kuḍya-stambhas* and *ghana-dvāras*, apart from paintings in light brown and green. Below the pyramidal roof comes the *grīvā* bearing stylized *hāra*-motif. To the south of this shrine is a small circular temple made of laterite blocks and carrying a thatched roof. All other temples, and all of them facing west, except the one housed in the kitchen, are four-sided on plan.

The Kṛishṇa shrine to the south-east of the main shrine is an impressive structure. An oblong tiled structure encloses a pure Drāviḍa shrine built on a square plan. In

conformity with the general pattern of Kerala temples, both its *grīvā*, relatively taller, and the *śikhara* are octagonal in shape. The granite *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vr̥tta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils, and *paṭṭikā*. It also has a *vēdī*. Walls are plain but for the simple pilasters. The entrance is from the east through a flight of steps flanked on either side by *hasti-hasta* banister. As pointed out before, similar shrine has been noticed in the Vaḍakkunnātha temple-complex at Trichur and the Trikōtēśvara temple at Punalur.

Trikkandiyur: Śiva temple

(Pl. XXI B; figs. 8, 15 and 33)

The Śiva temple at Trikkandiyur, only two kilometre from Tirur, in Tirur Taluk, of District Malappuram, is an apsidal *dvaitala-vimāna*, the nucleus of which dates back to the tenth century. As already stated (p. 170), its early phase is represented by its old *adhishṭhāna*, now being used as the *upapīṭha*. Over the earlier granite base rises the present *adhishṭhāna* leaving a batter of about 3 ft (0·91 m). The mouldings of the *adhishṭhāna* consist of *upāna*, a short *jagatī*, *vr̥tta-kumuda* of rather flattish variety, *kaṇṭha* with dentils or representation of *lupās* and *paṭṭikās*. It is followed by *vēdī* which contains floral designs alternating with *pādas*, a decorative motif that might have emerged some time in the eleventh century. Surprisingly, the mouldings above the *vr̥tta-kumuda* only share the recesses and projections of the wall. For all practical purposes, the wall starts from the *vr̥tta-kumuda*, as the projection of the mouldings above the *kumuda* is almost in a line with that of the wall. This leads us to another surmise: the *adhishṭhāna* up to the *kumuda* is earlier than the other mouldings.

Above the *vēdikā* has been built the wall in laterite blocks. It is relieved with *kuḍya-stambhas*, *ghana-dvāras* and *kōshṭha-pañjaras*, the last-mentioned motif occurring only in the *hārāntara*-recesses. All the pilasters carry cross-corbels, corbels being of the bevelled type with tenon. The *valabhī* of the *prastara* is embellished with a row of *bhūtas* while the *kapōta* bears *nāsikās*, enclosing human face. Although the temple is dedicated to Śiva all the arches above the *ghana-dvāras* enclose some Vaishṇava figure or the other: the northern and the western sides contain respectively the figures of Narasimha tearing the entrails of Hiraṇyakaśipu and a four-armed seated image of Viṣṇu with usual *āyudhas*. Both the *grīvā*, which has the *hāra* in highly stylized form, and the *śikhara* are *gaja-prishṭhākāra*. It seems that the vertical rise above the *kumuda* is a later renovation. Appearance of Vaishṇava figures above the *ghana-dvāras* might have added in the seventeenth century when the revival of the *Bhakti* cult created a stir throughout Kerala.

Internally, the shrine is divided into apsidal *garbha-griha* and squarish *mukha-maṇḍapa*, none of the units having any columns. In the *garbha-griha* is enshrined a cylindrical *liṅga* on a square *pīṭha*. Perhaps the *garbha-griha* here does not have any roof or *śikhara* of its own. It is also a *nirandhāra* temple, a plan surviving from the earliest phase of the temple. The entrance into the *mukha-maṇḍapa* is through a *sōpāna* with *hasti-hasta* banisters, the latter carved with the representation of *tōraṇa*. There are two *praṇālas* here—one for the *garbha-griha* and the other for the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. Both come out of the *kaṇṭha* but without any

simha-mukha. Associated with the *praṇāla* of the *garbha-griha* is a squatting female dwarf, carrying the *nāla* on her head. A channelled *praṇāla* of early variety, resting on a *nāga-kal*, is connected with the *mukha-maṇḍapa*.

The temple has not merely a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* but also a *balikkal-maṇḍapa*, both following an axial arrangement. On the north-eastern corner of the *nālambalam* stands a square flat-roofed Gaṇeśa shrine facing the east. Though considerably remodelled, the *adhishṭhāna* of the Gaṇapati shrine is the same as that of the present *upapīṭha* or the earlier *adhishṭhāna*. It is noteworthy that the level on which the *upapīṭha* rests is the same as that of the Gaṇeśa shrine. All this may tend to show that the Gaṇeśa shrine is more or less coeval with the Early phase of the complex. Even the *nālambalam* has an earlier phase contemporaneous with the first phase of the temple-complex.

Two more sub-shrines, one dedicated to Paraśurāma and the other to Kṛishṇa are to be seen on the north-eastern and the north-western corners respectively. Again, on the south-eastern corner of the main temple stands a small apsidal shrine dedicated to Kālī. Its *adhishṭhāna* is made of granite whereas the *bhitti* is built of laterite blocks. Inside the *garbha-griha* is installed a stone on a square *pīṭha*, symbolizing Kālī or Bhagavatī.

Tiruvannur: Śiva temple

(Pl. XXI A; figs. 8 and 34)

The Śiva temple at Tiruvannur in the outskirts of Calicut, in District Kozhikode, belongs to the same category as that of Triprangod or Trikkandiyur. All the three temples have an earlier phase represented by the extant *adhishṭhāna*, which is now used as the *upapīṭha*. Like the temple at Triprangod it also faces west, and is built partly of laterite. As it stands today, it is a *dvitala-vimāna* with two *gaja-prishṭhākāra* roofs, both being covered with copper sheets. The upper roofs shows three *stūpīs*.

Like the temples at Triprangod and Trikkandiyur, it is also a *nirandhāra-vimāna* having its early phase (p. 172) represented by a *kapōta-bandha* type of *adhishṭhāna*. The wall is relieved by *pañjaras* and *kuḍya-stambhas*, but no demarcation exists on the exterior wall between the *garbha-griha* and the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. On the contrary, the apsidal *garbha-griha* is clearly separated in the interior from the small square *mukha-maṇḍapa*. Significantly, its *bhitti* is considerably thick but the necessity of such a construction is difficult to make out specially when it is not possible to closely examine the interior.

The present *adhishṭhāna* of the temple is similar to that of the Śiva temple at Trikkandiyur. Its mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with a course of dentils and *paṭṭikā*. The *vēdī* above the *adhishṭhāna* has *pādas* alternating with floral motifs. Like the Trikkandiyur temple, here also the recesses and the projections start from above the *kumuda*. Even the wall-decorations, consisting primarily of the *kōshṭha-pañjaras* in the *hārāntara*-recesses and a pair of *kuḍya-stambhas*, besides the *ghana-dvāras* on the projected parts, are similar to those of the Trikkandiyur temple. Likewise, *pōtikās* are of the bevelled and tenoned type. But its *valabhī*, at least so far as the present state of preservation

is concerned, is of the plain variety. Above the *prastara* of the ground *tala* rises the *hāra* consisting of *kūṭas*, *pañjaras* and *śālās*. It is further embellished by wooden bracket figures representing among others the story of Kirātārjunīya. The *grīvā* also contains *hāra* as well as the wooden bracket figures.

The entrance into the temple, which enshrines a Śiva-*linga*, is through a long flight of steps flanked on either side by *hasti-hasta* banisters, bearing the representations of *tōraṇa* and *pūrṇa-kūmbha*. In the *sōpāna* of the Early phase, two lateral flights of steps meet at a common landing; it is screened by a banister carved with two figures of lion standing at opposite direction. The *praṇāla*, occupying the mouldings above the *kumuda*, is in the form of a *simha-mukha* issuing out the fluted *śuṇḍu*, having ornamental bands. It is placed too high, thus demanding the erection of an additional support, The dwarf-figure, squatting below with open mouth, is too small compared to the height of the *adhishṭhāna* and the placement of the *nāla*.

The temple, as usual, is enclosed by a *nālabalam*. In front of the temple stands the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, with a pyramidal roof overspread with copper sheet. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*.

To the north of the principal Śiva shrine is the shrine of Kṛishṇa, which is enclosed in a separate *nālabalam*. It is, however, without a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. The temple is a small structure facing the west. Axially, it consists of a square *garbha-griha*, enshrining the standing image of Kṛishṇa and a *mukha-maṇḍapa* projecting out of the sanctum. It has to be approached by means of a flight of three steps flanked on either side by a *hasti-hasta* banister bearing the figure of lion. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. It too has a *vedī*. Walls are almost plain but for the three *ghana-dvāras* and simple pilasters. The temple has a pyramidal roof laid with copper and crowned by a *stūpī*. Overtopping the *mukha-maṇḍapa* is a vaulted roof projecting like the *śuka-nāsā*, also covered with copper sheet.

It is thus evident that the temples at Triprangod, Trikkandiyur and Tiruvannur form a group by themselves. All the three are *nirandhāra*-shrines with their beginning going back to the Early phase. Very likely the present plan was conditioned largely by the earlier layout, which favoured *nirandhāra* rather than the *sāndhāra* character. On the other hand, Kizhavellur and Nedumpura are *sāndhāra* shrines, the former coming into existence in A.D. 1035. Perhaps this was the period when the group of three *nirandhāra* temples was rebuilt, each on an earlier base. If that be the case, the renovation phase has to be dated to the middle of the eleventh century.

CHAPTER VII

LATE PHASE

1. INTRODUCTION

It cannot be denied that the majority of the temples that stand today in different parts of the state belong to the Late phase; it is so not because they were raised for the first time but mostly by virtue of their being fully remodelled, or sometimes even built anew, in this period itself. The number of freshly-built shrines of real architectural value is not many as the endeavour was mainly towards enlarging the already-existent temple-complexes. Sites undoubtedly have their sanctity; and so the general tendency is to preserve the site, and not so much the edifice. Naturally, a temple that may exist on an ancient site had to pass through many stages of repairs and alterations. In the circumstances, there is every justification of including them in the Late phase once these are denuded of all their early vestiges.

No special effort need be made to prove that the temple-architecture here shared the same level of development as that of the neighbouring Tamiḷ country or Karṇāṭaka. Some changes in the layout and architectural motifs, besides the general trend towards greater elaboration, can be observed in Tamiḷnāḍu from the latter half of the twelfth century onwards. These include, to be more specific, various structural additions like raising of subsidiary units around or in a line to the main shrine, incorporation of the Dēvī shrine, construction of taller gateways or *gōpuras*, and erection of more than one *prākāra*. Some of these architectural elaborations were grafted on the traces of earlier layout, giving rise to stupendous structural complexes. But here the emphasis has always been on horizontality rather than on verticality. The conception of *pañcha-prākāra* was also adopted in some of the temple-sites; moreover, large adjuncts like *balikkal-maṇḍapa* and *kūttambalam* are products of the same movement. This was also the period of the growth of *dhvaja-stambha*, specially in south Kerala.

It is rather surprising that the idea of *dhvaja-stambha* as a monument of grace and beauty never assumed popularity in Kerala despite its early appearance in the Brahmanical architecture of south India. For instance, it was present in the Brahmanical temples, of Nagarjunakonda, assignable to the third century A.D.¹ In all-India context its antiquity can be pushed back to the second century B.C. as confirmed by the discovery of more than one column, including the famous Heliodorous pillar in front of a Vaishṇava

¹ The Pushpabhadrasvāmī temple yielded an inscribed *dhvaja-stambha* dated in the sixteenth regnal year of the Ikshvāku king Ehalā Chāritamūla. See *Epigraphia Indica* XXXIV, pp. 17-20.

shrine at Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh.¹ On the contrary, the temples of Kerala are generally without a permanent flag-staff though *balipīṭha* occurs almost as the constant feature. Only rich and important temples, most of them in south Kerala, have permanent *dhvajastambha*. On festive occasions, however, improvised flag-staff is made out of the trunk of areca-nut tree and on the last day of the function it is lowered down in the temple-tank.

A few illustrations in respect of important architectural developments may be cited here. It is well-known that murals and wood-works attained wide vogue in this phase; and these aspects have already been discussed (pp. 117-20 and 122-31). In matters of minor motifs some notable developments can also be observed in Kerala. For the first time, in the twelfth century, *pushpa-pōtikās* appear in the Chōḷa temples: they occur in a subsidiary shrine of the Airāvatēśvara temple at Darasuram of the time of Rājārāja II (1146-73), the Agastyēśvara temple at Atti, District North Arcot, built by Rājādhirāja II (1163-78) and the Kampaharēśvara temple at Tribhuvanam of the time of Kulōttuṅga III (1178-1218). Their emergence in the Pāṇḍya architecture of the time is but natural specially when this dynasty dominated the architectural field of the south during the latter half of the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, the Pāṇḍya contribution to the south Indian architecture has yet to be assessed in proper perspective. Anyway, among the known Kerala temples, *pushpa-pōtikās* appear in the Sukapuram Dakṣiṇāmūrti temple at Edappal, assignable to the first half of the thirteenth century (above, p. 193).

Almost as a corollary to the evolution of the *pushpa-pōtikā* is the emergence of *praṇālas* terminating in lotus or lotus-bud. The date of its appearance has been fixed by the present writer to the middle of the thirteenth century (above, pp. 91-92). Simultaneously, it might have come into vogue in south Kerala, which then occupied a pre-eminent position in the political and architectural history of the west coast. Highly ornamental *upapīṭhas*, *adhishṭhānas* and *sōpāna-phalakas* now revealed relatively higher incidence in Kerala. Banisters here are mostly carved with gods and goddesses, sometimes even representing the entire retinue of a particular deity. But this type of decorative elements is confined to south Kerala largely embracing the kingdom of Vēṇāḍu.

In the Late phase, specially during its first half, Vēṇāḍu occupied the pride of place in the religious and architectural history of the time. Evident as it is, the beginning of this phase has been fixed to *circa* A.D. 1301, particularly on the basis of various political considerations. Briefly speaking, it was the period when the Chōḷas had vanished completely from the political scene. There were grim forebodings of the collapse of the Pāṇḍya empire as well. Till the close of the thirteenth century, the Vēṇāḍu territory was under the hegemony of the Pāṇḍyas. Jaṭāvarmaṇ Sundara Pāṇḍya and his successor Māṇavarmaṇ Kulaśēkhara restored the lost glory of this dynasty, and their arms penetrated in all the directions to proclaim not only their victorious march but also their religious fervour and zeal. But the beginning of the fourteenth century brought disaster in the Pāṇḍya kingdom which was overtaken by an internecine feuds between the two sons of Māṇavarmaṇ

¹ Evidently, the Aśokan columns have been excluded here. For the Heliodorous Garuḍa pillar, see *Annual Report of Archaeological Survey of India*, 1908-09, p. 126.

Kulaśēkhara. One of them, Sundara Pāṇḍya, invited Malik Kāfur who invaded the country in 1311 and inflicted a crushing defeat on the forces of Vīra Pāṇḍya, the other claimant of the throne. Taking advantage of this disorder and confusion, Ravivarma Kulaśēkhara (1299-1314), the great Vēṇāḍu ruler, made an incursion deep into the Tamil country and reached as far north as Kāñchī. He was not only a brilliant king and conqueror but also a zealous champion of Brahmanical faith. Also, he made Quilon, his capital-city, the cynosure of all the port-towns of Kerala, then thronging with merchant-ships, particularly from China.

The pattern of architectural movement was set at motion by Ravivarma Kulaśēkhara. He was responsible for the renovation of a number of temples, a mission pursued scrupulously by other rulers of the dynasty. It was, therefore, no accident that south Kerala produced the maximum number of temple-inscriptions registering variously the facts of reconstruction, fresh structural addition or new temple-building. Yet, by and large, it was more a renovation phase than a period of new edifices, specially in south Kerala.

Some amount of political stability was enjoyed by south Kerala at least during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. Even the rise of the Vijayanagara power, in A.D. 1336, which provided the much-needed political unification of the greater part of south India, did not materially alter the political equilibrium of Vēṇāḍu which, save for some brief spells, remained outside the ambit of the Vijayanagara empire.¹ From the middle of the fourteenth century onwards the Zamorins of Calicut made their presence felt in central Kerala as the Kolatiris did in north Malabar. In spite of the emergence of three principal levers of power the political situation in Kerala remained riven with dissension and strife. With the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498, the economic condition had improved due to comparatively better external trade. The most peaceful and culturally propitious epoch was the period of Dutch contact with Malabar. This must have provided fresh impetus for the construction of new temples in different princedoms and chieftaincies.

Ideologically, the next two centuries proved to be a great ferment, as the contact with Islam and Christianity led to the reawakening of Hinduism. As a result, a new wave of *Bhakti* movement swept the entire Kerala in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Larger temple-complexes with more than one main shrine came up as a direct reaction to this new philosophy. Into the older temples were added shrines for other gods or goddesses; murals and wood-works reflect the same eclectic outlook, the same religious tenets. Side by side, the temple-authorities had grown powerful—so powerful as to thwart all earthly authority, including the royal writ.² It was Mārttaṇḍa Varma who had at long last crushed the power of the feudal lords and showed the temple-priests and holders of temple-lands their proper places.

¹ In the conflict between Achyuta-Rāya's army and the forces of Vēṇāḍu under Bhūtalavīra Udaya-Mārttaṇḍa Varma (1516-35), the latter had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Vijayanagara monarch, and part with some territory in the Tirumelveli District.

² A. Sreedhara Menon (1967), *op. cit.*, pp. 243-44.

On January 3, 1750, Mārttāṇḍa Varma dedicated his kingdom to his tutelary deity Śrī Padmanābhasvāmī with a view 'to serving the god as a mere servant. He started repairing the temple as early as 1731 with an idea to reconsecrate the idol. Several other repairs and additions were carried out previously by some Vēṇāḍu ruler or the other. In the fourteenth century, apart from the munificence that it received from Ravivarma Kulaśekhara, some important additions were also made to this sacred shrine. Thus Ādityavarmaṇ *alias* Sarvāṅganātha constructed the shrine of Kṛishṇa, *gō-śālā*, a *maṇḍapa* and the *dīpikā-griham* in the Śaka year 1296 (A.D. 1375).¹ Similarly, Suchindram and the Ādikēśavapperumāl temple of Tiruvāṭṭāru received constant attention of the Vēṇāḍu kings. A major renovation of the Ādikēśavapperumāl temple was undertaken in Kollam 778-782 (A.D. 1603-07) by king Vīra Ravi Ravivarma. He effected 'repairs and added fresh structures to the temple of Ādikēśavapperumāl and the four *tirumā'igaippatties*, the kitchen, the water-room (?), the paving of the innermost places with stones, the *oraiikkāl-maṇḍapa*, the *dvāra-pālās*, the pillar of lights, and the roofing of the hall (in which) the *balikkal* stands, were constructed.'² Both the temples referred to above are oblong on plan, meant to enshrine the Anantaśāyī form of Viṣṇu. However, it is not known if any new oblong shrine was raised in the Late phase.

That the Vēṇāḍu rulers took active interest in the upkeep of the Sthāṇunāthasvāmī temple at Suchindram, District Kanyakumari, is evident from a number of inscriptions available there. The temple with its nucleus going back to the times of the Āy rule yielded more than a hundred inscriptions belonging variously to the Chōḷas, including Chōḷa-Pāṇḍya viceroys, the Pāṇḍyas, the Vēṇāḍu and the Vijayanagara lines of rulers, besides a galaxy of private donors.³ These epigraphs clearly show that the temple-complex was not built in a day. It is a case of gradual development spreading over a millennium or so. In Kollam 586 (A.D. 1411), Mārttāṇḍavarmaṇ built a *maṇḍapa* and *sabhā-maṇḍapa* here.⁴ King Rāmavarma constructed a *maṇḍapa* in Kollam 654 (A.D. 1479) in front of God Sthāṇunāthasvāmī.⁵ This large temple complex grew around one or more square shrines with *śikhara* (pl. LXIV B), having a prominent *nāsikā*.

It is necessary to have a few words about the most famous shrine in Kerala—the Kṛishṇa temple at Guruvayur, in District Trichur. As a great pilgrim centre, the temple is bound to undergo many alterations, the last of which took place a few years back when an accidental fire caused damage to some structures. In all likelihood, the temple-complex is the product of this phase alone. It may be recalled here that it was Puntanam Numbudiri (1547-1640) who brought the Guruvayur-appaṇ temple to limelight through his many devotional songs. Its principal shrine, facing the east, is a square *dvitala-vimāna* enclosed by a *nāḷambalam*. All the roof, including that of the square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* are covered

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, I, pt. IX, pp. 171-73.

² *Ibid.*, pt. X, p. 175.

³ R. Vasudeva Poduval (1941), *op. cit.*, pp. 193-223. Also K. K. Pillay (1956), *op. cit.*, pp. 440-49.

⁴ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VIII, p. 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

with copper sheets. Walls of the main shrine have murals but the most conspicuous features are the lofty *dhvaja-stambha*, a *dīpa-stambha* erected in A.D. 1836 by a resident of Tiruvananthapuram or Trivandrum, an impressive *balipīṭha*, the *gōpuras* and the temple tank. A Sanskrit inscription, in Malayalam characters, records the construction of the eastern *gōpura* with steps. It also refers to the old name of the place as Gurupavanapura. The western *gōpura* was raised, as the Malayalam inscription thereon says, in Kollam 922, Mesha 20 (A.D. 1747) by one Ittirādichcha-Mēṇōṇ.¹ It is said that *dhvaja-stambha* is a single piece of straight teak wood, collected from the jungle of the former state of Travancore. The wooden shaft forms the core which is enclosed by bell-metal, duly plated with gold. No less impressive is the tank situated to the north of the temple; it is popularly taken to be the surviving portion of a lake that once stretched from Guruvayur to Mammiyur. Architecturally, there is hardly any feature in the temple worthy of special consideration. Its interior could not be studied for obvious reasons but it seems that the image of Kṛishṇa is enshrined within a *garbha-griha* in the form of a miniature shrine. That explains the installation of the deity on an elevated part, providing fairly good view of the image. It is well-known that the representation of Guruvayur-appa is to be seen in the murals of the Mattancheri palace, Cochin.

Temples in other parts of Kerala also came up as will be evident from a number of examples that have been described below. But generally they have been constructed on square plans, the number of other types of ground-plan being relatively small. In this phase, however, the elliptical ground-plan, though represented by a solitary example, had its vogue. It is the famous Śiva temple at Vaikam, in District Kottayam. As the reason for including it under the elliptical plan has already been discussed, suffice it here to say that it is not an isolated monument of its kind as its parallel comes from other parts of south India (above, pp. 71-73).

2. SQUARE SHRINE

A. DRĀVIḌA

(i) GENERAL

The Drāviḍa style of temples in Kerala during the Late phase was inspired mainly by the Pāṇḍya architectural idiom. Sharing of common ideals and practices is but natural once the social and cultural ties transcend all political barrier. Furthermore, a part of the Pāṇḍya territory remained under the rule of the Vēṇāḍu kings for a very long time. Against this background, the occurrence of Drāviḍa style of temples in south Kerala seems quite natural.

Kollam or Quilon has a definite concentration of Drāviḍa shrines. It being the capital city and the most important port of south Kerala, the Vēṇāḍu rulers were certainly anxious

¹ For inscriptions on the eastern and the western *gōpuras*, see *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1947-48*, nos. 96-97.

to transform it into an important religious centre. Curiously, the earliest known epigraph from the town is that of Rāmavarma Kulaśēkhara (1090-1106) dated to A.D. 1102, the rest being ascribable to this phase only. Of all the temples of Quilon, the Rāmēśvara temple is by far the most impressive. The temple in many respects is similar to the Bhaktavatsala temple at Cheranmahadevi, District Tirunelveli. Yet the most intact specimen of Drāviḍa architecture at Quilon is the Gaṇapati temple, the brief description of which is given below.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Quilon: Gaṇapati temple

(Pl. XLVII A; fig. 54)

Built of granite from the *adhishṭhāna* to *śikhara*, the Gaṇapati temple at Quilon is an example of chaste *ekatala* Drāviḍa-*vimāna* of the *sama-chaturāśra* type. Facing the north, the temple enshrines a seated image of Gaṇapati. It is a *nirandhāra*-shrine without an ambulatory or column inside. In front of the temple stands the square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* having a tiled pyramidal roof; its base is of granite and has its own flight of steps, flanked on either side by elephant-shaped banisters, perhaps a late arrival in the history of south Indian architecture. Such *śpānas* are seen in the Kākatīya style of temples but rather uncommon in Tamiḷnāḍu except perhaps in the late Vijayanagara phase.

The entrance into the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, a typical Kerala feature, is from the east. It has its *adhishṭhāna*, consisting of *upāna*, *padma*, *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, and *paṭṭikā*. There are figures like elephant, peacock and row of *simha-mālā* in the *kaṇṭha*, while the *paṭṭikā* is inscribed with a Sanskrit inscription of Jayasimha *alias* Vīra-Kēraḷavarman dated to Kollam 671 (A.D. 1496). It refers to Nityaprajñamuṇi, the author of *Kramadīpikā-vyākhyā*; perhaps it was he who consecrated the temple dedicated to Gōvinda. Even the inscription begins with Hari Śrī.¹ It is, however, not known when it came to be known as Gaṇapati-naḍai.

There are two more inscriptions from the temple: one of them, a late Tamiḷ inscription engraved on the south wall of the temple, records the building of the wall by a native of Tiruviḍaimarudur.² Evidently, the reference is to some renovation that the temple underwent. A loose stone, near the west wall of the enclosure, mentions Tirunelveli and Kurakkeṇikkollam (Kollam); it is dated to Kollam 653 (A.D. 1478).³ On the basis of the epigraphical evidence alone the temple may be dated to the fifteenth century.

The temple proper consists of a square *garbha-griha* projecting a narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa*. It has towards the east a portico raised on a *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna*, while the western extension to house the *utsava* deity stands rather asymmetrically, both being

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, II, pp. 26-27. Also see, *Annual Report on Epigraphy 1895*, no. 258.

² *Ibid.*, no. 259.

³ *Ibid.*, no. 260. It may be the same epigraph as Poduval's (1941) no. 2 under Quilon, p. 183.

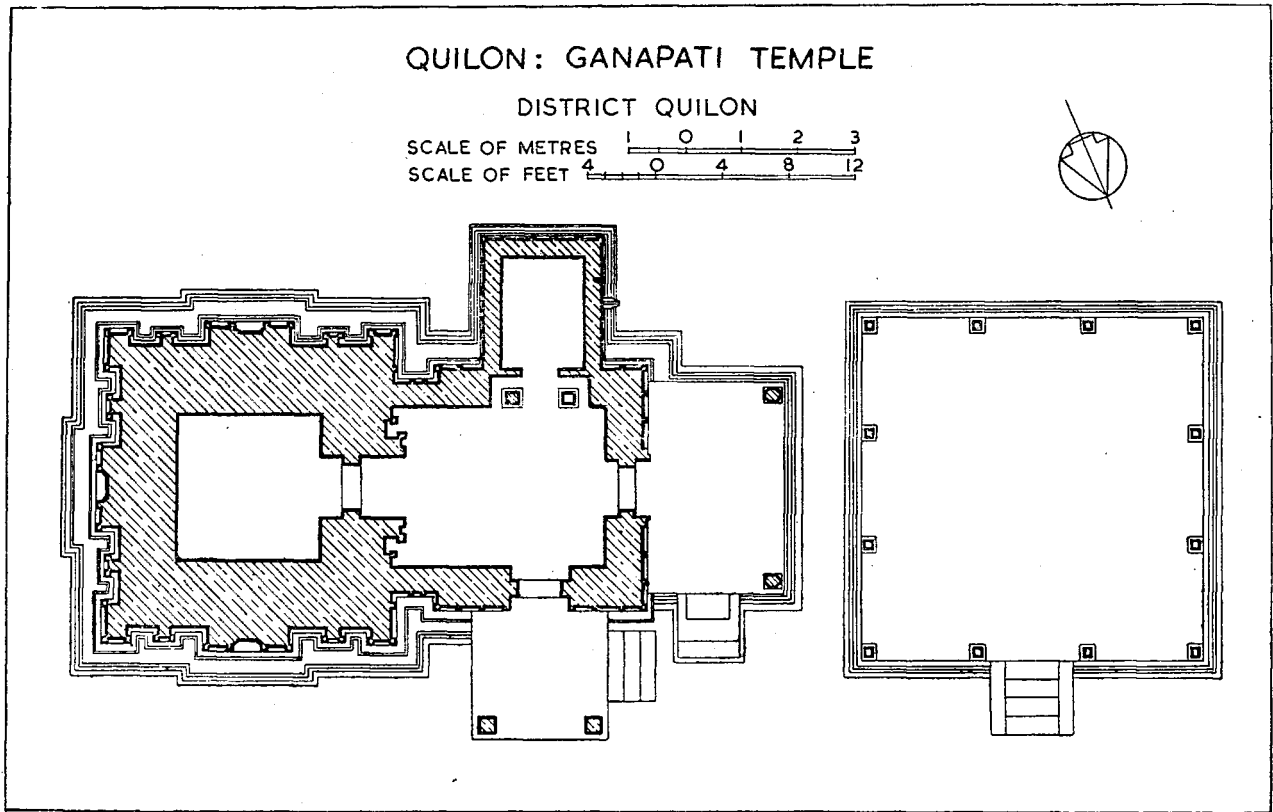


FIG. 54

of later accretions. Though the temple faces the north, the approach to it is through the east along the portico. Instead of two *dvāra-pālās*, there are two dwarf figures—*śaṅkha-nidhi* and *padma-nidhi*—on either side of the entrance. Its door-jambs have *padma-śākhās* on all the three sides but without any figure on the *lalāṭa-bimba*.

The temple stands on a very impressive base, divided into *upapīṭha* and *adhishṭhāna*. Both are highly ornamental, and decorative elements are reminiscent of the Vijayanagara tradition. Mouldings of the *upapīṭha* comprise *upāna*, *padma-jagatī*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pāda* and *kapōta* with *kuḍus*; it is crowned possibly by a *prati*. The temple has prominent *bhadra* projection in the centre, and the *adhishṭhāna* of the *bhadra*-projection differs substantially from that of the *karṇas*. In the former cases the *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *padma*, *antari*, *kumuda* with vertical flutings and a central band, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas*, *kapōta* with *kūḍus*, and *prati*. It is followed by *vēdikā* while the *dēva-kōshṭhas* are cut into it. The *karṇas* have octagonal *kumuda* in place of fluted one, whereas the other mouldings include *upāna* in the form of *padma-pādukā*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* and *paṭṭikā*. The *vēdī* above the *adhishṭhāna* is crowned by a *kapōta* moulding. Again, the mouldings below the *nāsikā-pañjara* differs from those of the *bhadra* and the major part of the *karṇas*.

Like the *adhishṭhāna*, the walls are also relieved with recesses and returns more or less conforming to those of the *adhishṭhāna*. In the *bhadra*-projection is the false *dēva-kōshṭhas*

with *śālā-śikhara* showing two tiers, each one embellished with *nāsikās*. On either extremity of the *bhadra* is a fluted *kudya-stambhas* carrying *pushpa-pōtikās*. *Karṇas* have, apart from *nāsikā-pañjaras*, two more *kudya-stambhas* with developed features, including the *nāga*-motif at the termination of the tetragonal lower part. It has *padma-valabhī* and a prominent *kapōta*. Needless to say, its *grīvā* and *śikhara* are square in shape, each side having a *nāsikā*. Another noteworthy feature is the occurrence of carvings representing elephant, peacock, *gaja-vyāla*, Subrahmaṇya and so on confined mostly to the eastern wall. These representations are on individual slabs, and seems to be a peculiarity of the Vijayanagara tradition. Mostly these are casual carvings done by stone-cutters while sizing the individual slabs.

Quilon : Śrī Rāmēśvara temple

(Pls. XLVII B and C; figs. 11 and 15)

Judged by the extant *adhishṭhāna*, the Rāmēśvara temple at Kollam or Quilon, must have originally been a very impressive edifice, now stripped off all its former grandeur. It was also an old temple-site as it is evident from the discovery of an inscription of a Chēra king dated to A.D. 1102-3 (Kollam 278). The Chēra king is generally identified with Rāmavarma Kulaśēkhara, perhaps the last important name in the dynastic list. He has been introduced in the Rāmēśvara temple-inscription as *Irāmar-Tiruvaḍi-Kōyiladhikārigal-āyina Kulaśēkhara-chChakkara-vattiga*. The title *Kōyiladhikāri* deserves special mention: it means literally controller of temple. 'It is possible that the management of the palace was left in the hands of an important officer, sometimes the young crown-prince himself, who was consequently called the *Kōyiladhikāri*, and so Gundert has translated this term as the Palace-Major; but as the kings of Kēraḷa were known to have specially interested themselves in temple affairs, it appears more probable that even during the life-time of a reigning sovereign, the supervision of the temple demesne was vested in the crown-prince so as to give him the proper preliminary training in administrative work, and that he was given the title of *Kōyiladhikāri*.'¹ Nevertheless, in the face of all this, none can deny the antiquity of the Rāmēśvara temple whose supervision must have been entrusted to a reigning Chēra king or a crown-prince.

The Rāmēśvara temple at Quilon has yielded two more inscriptions : one of them, inscribed on the western entrance, records its very construction in Kollam 516 (A.D. 1343), while the other record is dated to Kollam 513 (A.D. 1337-38).² Evidences of these two inscriptions may show that the temple must have undergone thorough renovation in the first half of the fourteenth century. Even the surviving architectural features may point to the same conclusion.

The temple faces the west and is at present a Kerala style of shrine, with two storeys. Unfortunately, only the *adhishṭhāna* can be dated to the fourteenth century, the rest of

¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, XVIII, p. 341. Also *Travancore Archaeological Series*, V, pp. 40-46.

² *Travancore Archaeological Series*, V, pp. 46-48.

the structure being of still later dates. The *adhishṭhāna* is of a highly ornate variety recalling the later Pāṇḍya or Chōḷa tradition which merged imperceptibly into what is now commonly called Vijaynagara style. Again, it stands on an *upapīṭha*, the mouldings of which consist of *upāna*, *padma-jagatī*, *antarī*, *paṭṭikā*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas*, crowned by *kapōta* decorated with *kūḍus*. Above the *kapōta* comes another mouldings which may be called *prati*, but offers a provision for a walk all round. The actual *adhishṭhāna*, too, stands on a *padma-pādukā*, an optional member similar to an *upapīṭha*. Mouldings above it comprise a short *upāna*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *pādas*, *paṭṭikā* and *prati*.

Its *praṇāla* is equally ornamental in that a full-length *śimha* figure springs out of the *śimha*'s mouth occupying largely the *kumuda* moulding. Above this head is a seated *śimha* figure, much smaller in size than the one serving as the *ambu-mārga*, which ends, however, in a lotus-bud. One of the hind legs of the *śimha* rests on the head of a seated dwarf kept in the interspace between the *adhishṭhāna* and the *upapīṭha*. In many respects it is a unique kind of *nāla*, transformed into a fine artistic piece. Its exact parallel comes from the Bhaktavatsala temple at Cheranmahadevi, District Tirunelveli. No less beautiful is the *hasti-hasta* banisters carved with a leonine figure; the friezes of the banisters are not only fluted but also wavy, ending ultimately into a volute.

Originally, the temple, unlike the Gaṇapati temple, appears to have been a Kerala style of temple, for it is a *sāndhāra-vimāna* consisting of a square sanctum and *mukha-maṇḍapa*. But it is difficult to be sure of it because of the presence of a highly ornamental *adhishṭhāna*. In its next phase, the Kēraḷa style of temple was transformed into a Drāviḍa shrine to be converted eventually again into a Kerala style of temple. In the centre of the *garbhagriha* is a Śiva-*liṅga* planted on a square *pīṭha*. There are no pillars inside, nor there is any other arrangement except the ambulatory. At present it is a *dvitala-vimāna*, carrying pyramidal roof of tiles.

In front of the shrine stands a square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, which must have been built, during the fourteenth century. It, too, has an impressive base, divided into *upapīṭha* and *adhishṭhāna*. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *padma-jagatī*, *antarī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* and *paṭṭikā*. As usual, there are four pillars in the inner row, and twelve along the periphery.

The northern and western wings of the *nālambalam*, that surrounds the entire structural complex, have fallen down. There are three minor shrines, two of them, facing the east, being inside the western wing of the *nālambalam*; the other to the north faces the south. All the three shrines have prominently-built *sōpānas*. These three shrines are dedicated variously to Subrahmaṇya, Chaṇḍēśa and Gaṇapati; and of them, the shrine for Subrahmaṇya has elephant-shaped banisters, while those of the Chaṇḍēśa shrine are truly *hastihastas*. Both the shrines contain the respective images of Chaṇḍēśa and Subrahmaṇya. The latter is a four-armed standing figure on a low square pedestal. With the peacock behind, its two lower hands are in the *abhaya* and *varada*, whereas the lower hands hold *vajra* and *śakti*. Chaṇḍēśa is a two-armed seated image executed in black granite. But the seated figure of Gaṇapati is four-armed.

Kanjirapalli: Gaṇapati temple

(Fig. 55)

The ruined Gaṇapati temple at Kanjirapalli, in Kanjirapalli Taluk, District Kottayam, is yet another example of square Drāviḍa shrine built of granite. Its superstructure has completely given way but it seems that it was just an *ekatala-vimāna* of the *nirandhāra* type. On the whole, it is not an ornate structure, nor has it been built on an evolved *adhishṭhāna*. Simplicity is its hall-mark: even the walls and *adhishṭhāna* are devoid of any recesses and returns. Axially, it consists of a square *garbha-griha*, meant for installing a Śiva-liṅga, *ardha-maṇḍapa*, *mahā-maṇḍapa* and front portico. Also, there is a subsidiary structure to the south of the *mahā-maṇḍapa*.

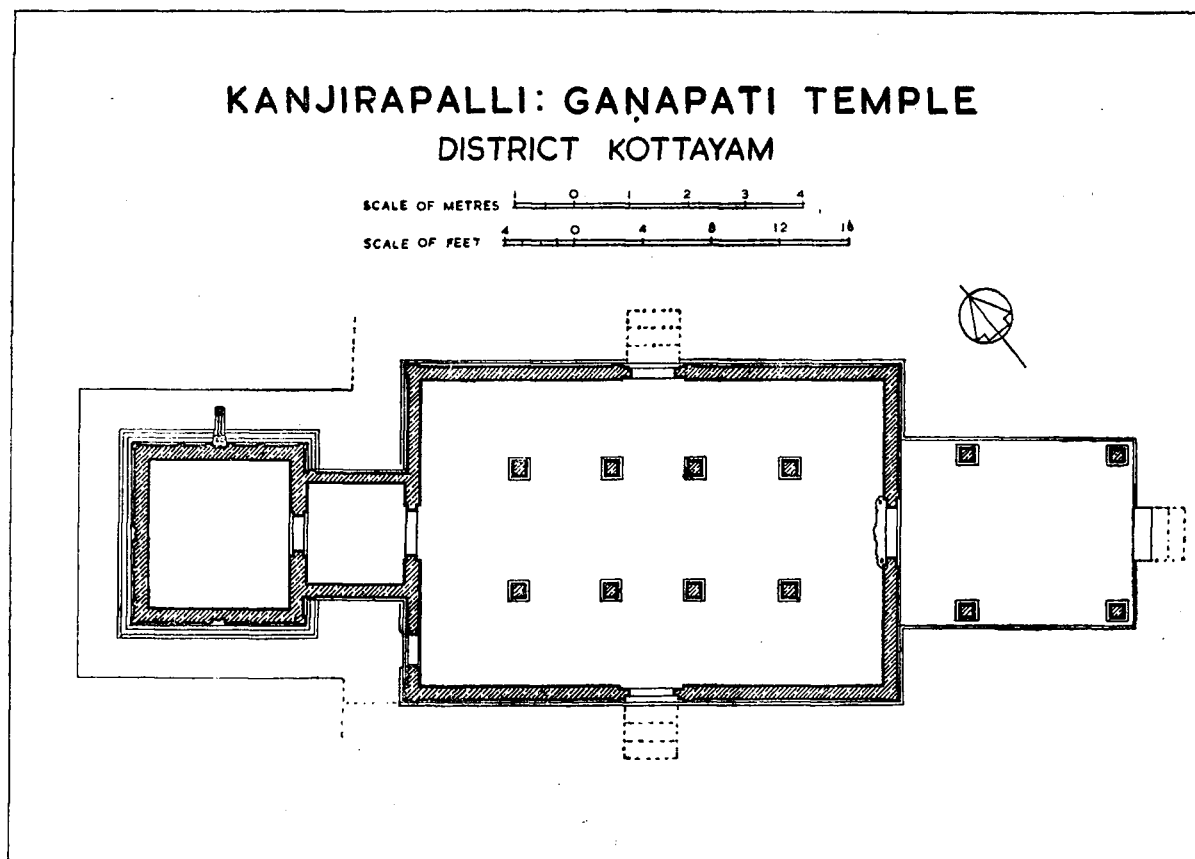


FIG. 55

Broadly speaking, the temple, located on an elevated ground, has two main phases: in the first phase it consists of the square sanctum and the *mukha-maṇḍapa* while in the subsequent phase another axial *maṇḍapa* and the front portico were added to it. So the space in front of the *mukha-maṇḍapa* was transformed in later times into *ardha-maṇḍapa*.

This part as well as the sanctum possibly came into existence some time in the fourteenth century, whereas the *mahā-maṇḍapa* and the portico were added perhaps two centuries later. Corbels of the latter units, it is interesting to note, are of the *pushpa-pōtikā* type but the sanctum shows the use of bevelled *pōtikās*. Significantly, the temple has an inscription which may be dated to the sixteenth century; the other notable inscription dates back to the eighteenth century.

The *adhishṭhāna* of the temple, which faces the east, consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. Both the *kaṇṭha* and the *vēdikā* are decorated with floral motifs alternating with the *pādas*. The *praṇāla* coming out of *simha*'s mouth is rather simple in that it has a fluted shaft ending in a lotus bud. It comes out of the *kaṇṭha* and rests practically on the square-sectioned part of the *kumuda*. Walls are decorated simply with *ghana-dvāras* and *kuḍya-stambhas*. It is noteworthy that the *ghana-dvāras* rise from above the *adhishṭhāna*, while the tetragonal pilasters come up from above the *vēdikā*. Above the *vēdī* can be seen some carvings like those of worshippers on granite slabs. Of the *prastara*, the most prominent members are *valabhī*, with *padma-dalas*, and *kapōta* decorated with *nāsikās*. Over the *kapōta* runs a course of dentils which are not deeply grooved as was the case with the earlier series. It is difficult to have any idea about its superstructure but a large number of fallen stones all round the temple may tend to show that it originally carried a superstructure, made possibly of stone.

The entrance into the shrine is through a flight of steps with *hasti-hasta* banisters, of which the northern *phalaka* bears a carving of Śiva accompanied by his mount. A seated figure of Dēvī is seen on the southern banister. On either side of the doorway stands a two-armed *dvāra-pāla*. Furthermore, on the front sanctum-wall are to be seen the carvings of Viṣṇu and Śiva. At present, the *garbha-griha* is without an image. The door-frames of the *garbhagriha* and *ardha-maṇḍapa* are plain. On the other hand, the *mahā-maṇḍapa*, standing on a *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna* has plain walls but the door-frame has four successive *śākhās* like those of *padma*, *ratna*, *padma* and *pushpa* respectively. Its *latāṭa-bimba* shows *Gaja-Lakshmī*. Even the door-frame of the northern entrance has *śākhās*, while on the *lalāṭa-bimba* is depicted with the figures of Śiva-Pārvatī, with a sage standing to the right of Śiva. The *mahā-maṇḍapa* has eight columns dividing it into three bays. All the columns show *pushpa-pōtikās* and also bear carvings variously of worshippers, Hanumān, Gaṇapati, Subrahmaṇya, dancing figures, *mithuna* figures and so on. The portico, open on all the sides, stand on four pillars, also with *pushpa-pōtikās*. However, its roof has completely fallen down. There is a small circular *liṅga*, now mutilated, inside the square pedestal and its occurrence may show that the temple, built in Pāṇḍya idiom, was dedicated originally to Śiva.

B. DRĀVIDA-KĒRAḶA

(i) GENERAL

Temples continued to be built or rebuilt in traditional Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style throughout Kerala during the Late phase. It was also the period when various ornate structures

and sculptural embellishments were added to the pre-existing edifice, a trend quite universal in south India. Here we propose to describe a few representative temple-types.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Kalpathi (Palghat) : Viśvanātha temple

(Pl. LXVIII A; fig. 56)

The Viśvanātha temple-complex at Kalpathi, a suburb of Palghat town, is situated on the southern bank of the Kalpathipuzha. It faces the east, and consists of the principal Viśvanātha shrine, Kāśī-Viśālākshī and Mahā-Gaṇapati shrines. While the Gaṇapati shrine faces the east, the shrine for Dēvī, like the one meant for housing the *utsava-mūrtis*, has to be approached from the south. An inscription engraved on a stone-slab, set up in front of the temple, refers the deity as Viśvanāthasvāmin. The inscription is written in the Vaṭṭeḷuttu characters of about the fifteenth century; of course, the language is Malayalam. It records the grant to the deity of real and movable property, and the constitution of members of the Iṭṭi-Kkōmbi (Kōṇikkalaḍam) section of the Palghat Rāja's family as trustees thereof.¹ Apparently, the temple was under the care of the family of the Palghat Rāja. The inscription was cut at the bidding of Rāyiram Kuṇḍatt Paṅgi, the ancestral scribes of the Palghat Rājas.

The temple, enclosed by a *nāḷambalam*, is a *nirandhāra*-temple built externally on a rectangular plan because of the total integration of the square *garbha-griha* and the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. To some extent, the plan is more nearer to the Drāviḍa pattern than the indigenous tradition. Because of the subsequent addition of a *mahā-maṇḍapa*, the *mukha-maṇḍapa* was to function as the *antarāla*. As a matter of fact, a flight of steps connects the *antarāla* with the pillared *mahā-maṇḍapa*. Built of laterite blocks, the walls, but for thin tetragonal pilasters, are plain and simple. An interesting feature of the temple is the use of *mañchaka* variety of the *adhishṭhāna*, a type generally not in vogue for temples or any house of god. The mouldings of the *adhishṭhāna* consist of *upāna*, tall *jagatī*, *kaṇṭha* with *pādas* and *paṭṭikā*. Each of the walls of the *garbha-griha* has *kuḍya-stambhas* at corners, besides two such pilasters in the centre enclosing the false niche with *makara-tōraṇa*. The *garbha-griha* enshrines a *bāṇa-līṅga* said to have been brought from Kāśī. Its timber roof has copper sheets as the *āchchhādana*; copper rafter-shoes have also been used here. A small sub-shrine projecting out of this temple on the south is meant for Dakṣiṇāmūrti; to the north stands the detached Chaṇḍēśa shrine.

The *mahā-maṇḍapa*, which is flanked on the northern side by the Dēvī shrine, stood originally on wooden columns; these were replaced by stone ones in 1966. This pillared frontage is common both to the Viśvanātha shrine as well as the shrine for Dēvī, the latter having decidedly two structural phases. Though heavily plastered, *pushpa-ptōikās* are clearly visible on the walls of the Dēvī shrine, which has a Gaja-Lakshmī on the *lalāṭa-bimba*.

¹ *Epigraphia Indica*, XV, pp. 145-49.

KALPATHI : VIŚVANĀTHA TEMPLE
DISTRICT PALGHAT

SCALE OF FEET 5 10 15 20 25

SCALE OF METRES 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

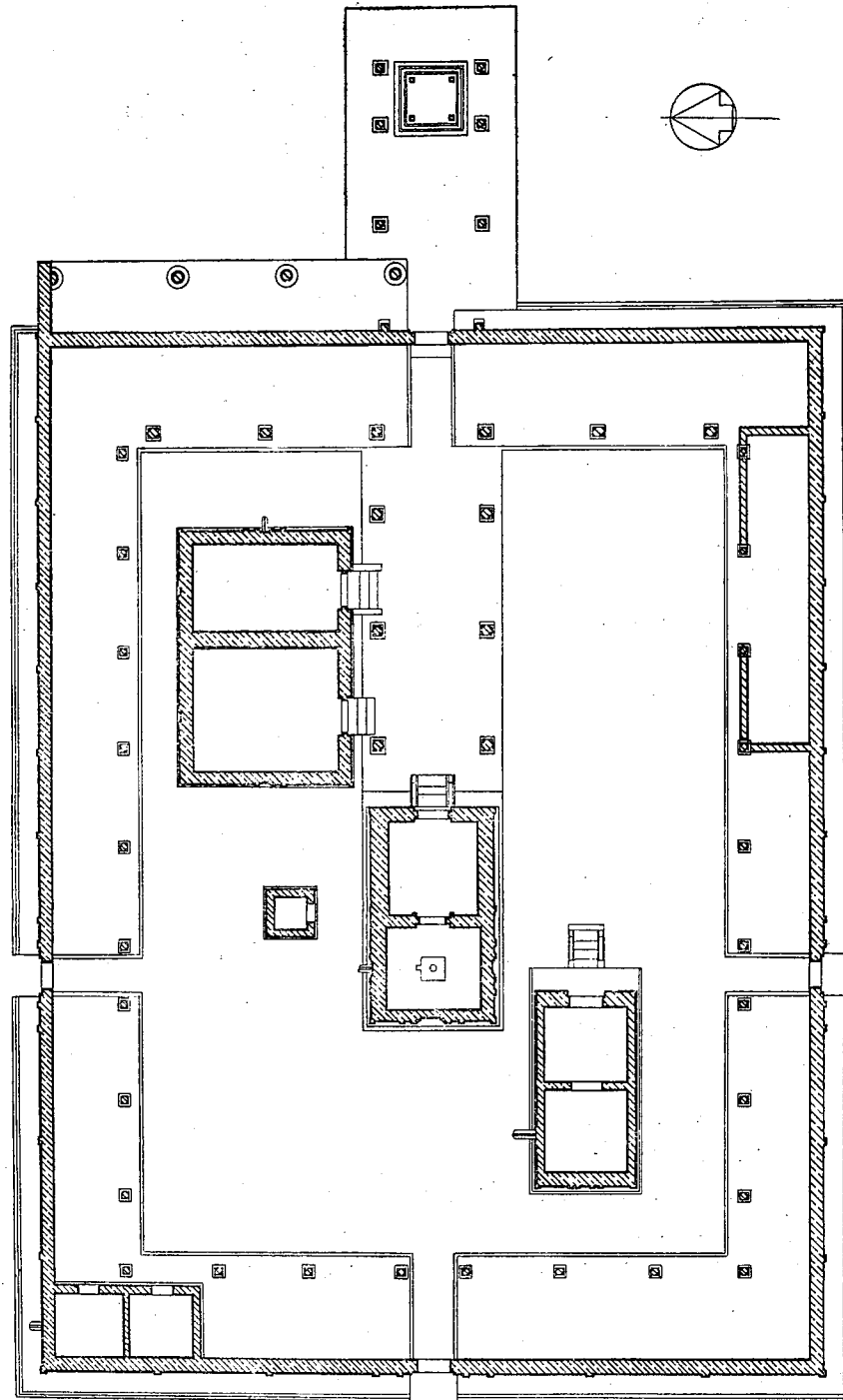


Fig. 56

The entire temple complex is surrounded by the *nāḷambalam*, the wooden columns of which are carved variously with the figures of Gaṇēśa, Dēvī and different floral motifs. A pillared *nandi-maṇḍapa* is located outside the entrance; and in between the *dhvaja-stambha* and the *nandi-maṇḍapa* stands the inscribed stone-slab. On the basis of this inscription and other stylistic features, the temple, which thrived under the patronage of the Palghat Rājās, may be ascribed to the first half of the fifteenth century.

Podiyal : Kṛishṇa temple

(Pl. XLIX; figs. 11-12, 15 and 57)

The Kṛishṇa temple at Podiyal, in Kunnathunad Taluk of District Ernakulam, is a small complex comprising two square shrines, each fronted by a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. Both are known as Kṛishṇa temples in spite of the fact that the images are those of Viṣṇu. But for the main Kṛishṇa shrine, which is in granite, the entire structural complex, inclusive of the other shrine, is built of laterite blocks. The subsidiary Kṛishṇa shrine has a tiled pyramidal roof on a plain wall; its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *pādas* and *paṭṭikā*. It has a simple *praṇāla* which, like the *sōpāna* with the banisters, is made of granite.

The main temple is a square *dvitala-vimāna* facing the west. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *simha-mālā* and *paṭṭikā*. The *vēdī* above the *adhishṭhāna* has *pādas* alternating with floral designs. Its channelled *praṇāla*, of circular section, coming out of the *kaṇṭha* is devoid of any decoration save its lipped end. Interestingly, the *adhishṭhāna* has no recesses or returns but the walls are relieved with sham niches with *śālā-śikhara*, *ghana-dvāras*, and *kuḍya-stambhas* with bevelled corbels. It has a plain *valabhī*, but the *kapōta* is decorated with *kūḍus*. Both the roofs are now tiled; and above the first *tala* rises the square *grīvā*, which is indeed the second storey having a functional door on the west. The other three sides are having only *ghana-dvāras*. Its upper storey has a tiled pyramidal roof pinnacled by a *stūpī*.

On plan, the temple consists of just the sanctum enclosing a square *garbha-griha* with a *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* all round. It is of significance that the square *garbha-griha* with its own superstructure is made of laterite slabs. This evidence may suggest that the temple had an earlier phase when it was built entirely of laterite. At the time of the renovation, the *garbha-griha* was possibly left untouched. It is worthy of note that the Tamil Vaṭṭeḷuttu inscription on the *vṛitta-kumuda*, near the *praṇāla*, tells that the temple was built of stone in Kollam 635 when the Jupiter was in the *Tulā-rāśi*. In the circumstances, the reconstruction of the present shrine, in granite, may be dated to A.D. 1460.¹ That the temple had an earlier beginning may be guessed also from the discarded Viṣṇu image, lying in the compound. It exhibits Hoysala influence and may be dated to the thirteenth century (above, p. 110).

¹ Poduval (1941), *op. cit.*, 173.

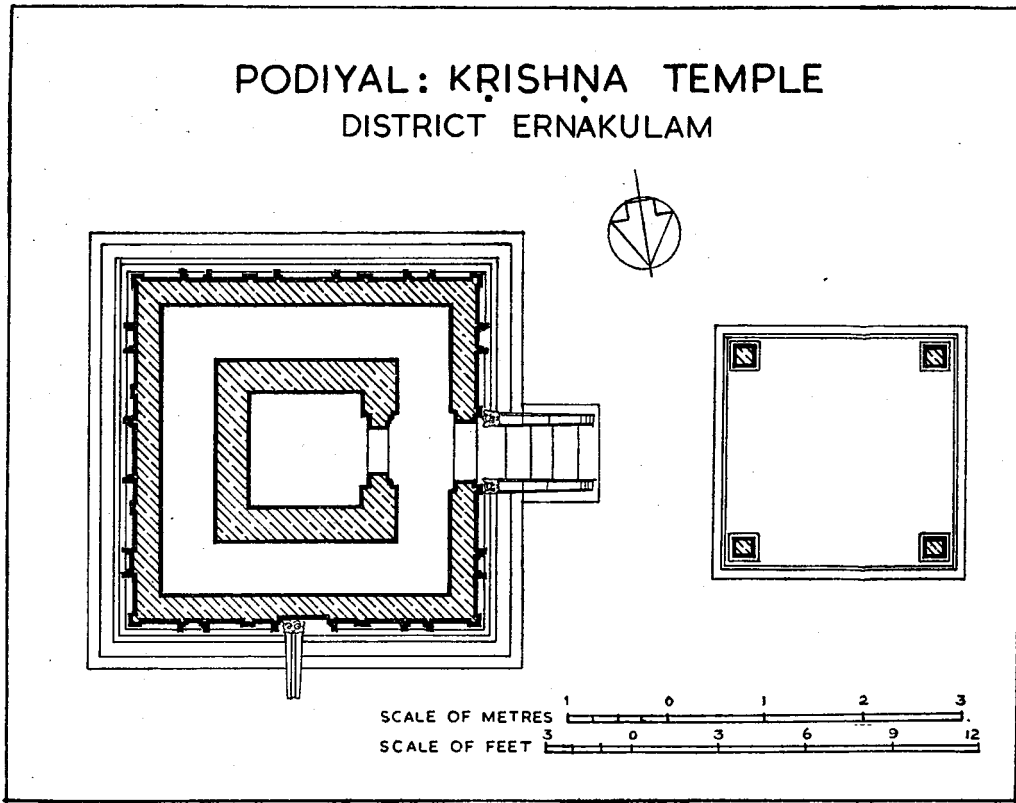


FIG. 57

Udayanapuram: Subrahmaṇya temple

(Pl. L B; figs. 11-12, 15 and 58)

The Subrahmaṇya temple at Udayanapuram, in Vaikam Taluk of District Kottayam, is a *dvitala sāndhāra-vimāna* consisting of square *garbha-griha* and the narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa*. It faces the east, and has also a detached *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front. Though belonging to the Late phase, the *sāndhāra* arrangement follows the classical pattern rather than the one peculiar to Kerala. The temple-base, divided into *upapīṭha* and *adhishṭhāna*, is of granite and the walls are of laterite blocks. In the *upapīṭha* are to be seen the mouldings like *padma*, high *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas*, *valabhī*, *kapōta* and *prati*. The *adhishṭhāna* has *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with *simha-mālā* and *makaras* at corners, and *paṭṭikā*, followed by *vēdī*.

No recessing is provided in the *upapīṭha*, though the *adhishṭhāna* and *bhitti* are divided into five bays alternating with the *hārāntara*-recesses. Indeed, compared to the walls of the previous phase, the *bhittis* are highly decorative. They have *kuḍya-stambhas* carrying *pushpa-pōtikās*, *ghana-dvāras* with *makara-tōraṇas*, niches with *nāsikā-pañjaras*; all the niches have *jālakas*. While the niches in the *hārāntaras* are narrow and with *nāsikā-pañjaras*, the others,

UDAYANAPURAM: SUBRAHMANYA TEMPLE

DISTRICT KOTTAYAM

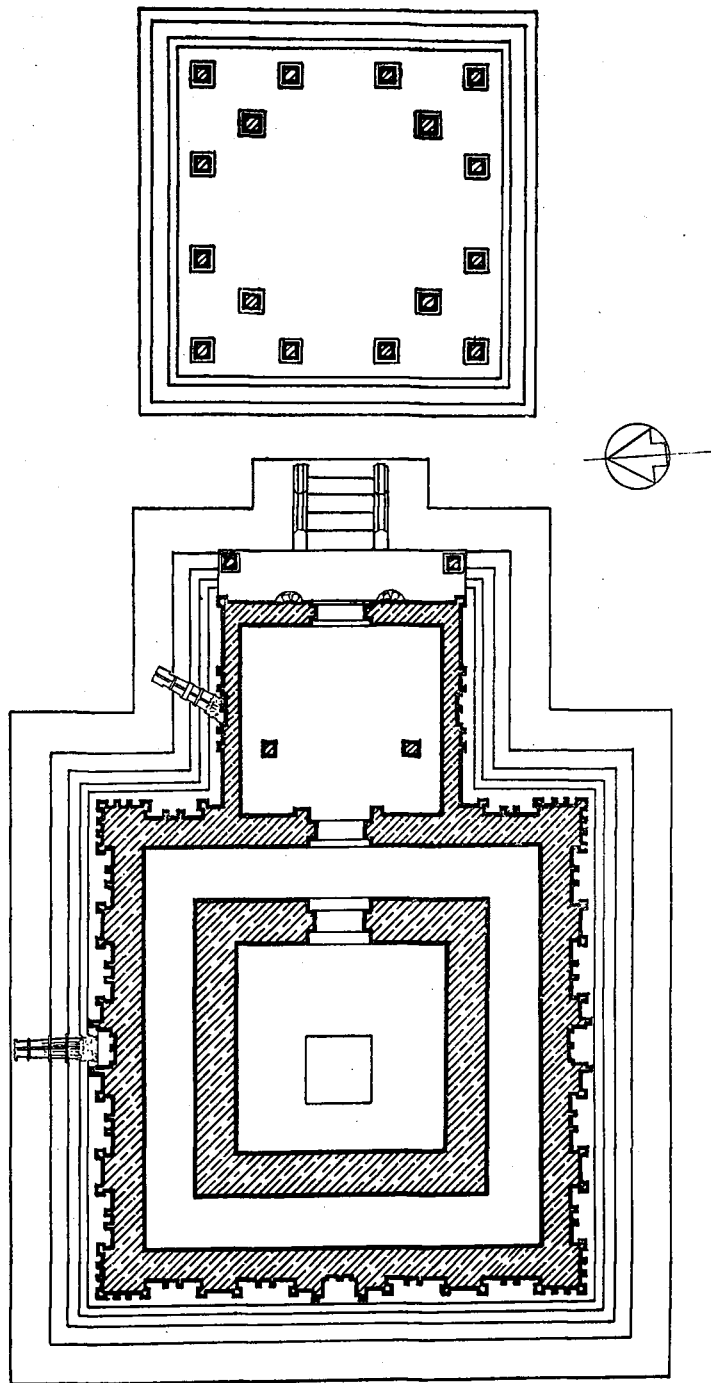
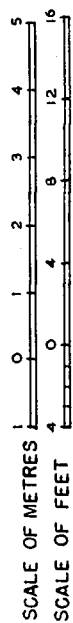


FIG. 58

somewhat broader, have *śālā-śikharas*. But all the architectural motifs have been reduced to decorative appendage, mostly redundant and devoid of grace and instinctive appeal. Like the minute ornamentation of sculptures and paintings of the period, the architectural elements and motifs here suffer from over-ornamentation and also distortion due to too much stylization.

Even the entablature and the parapet have been subjected to unnecessary ornamentation. The *kapōta* as well as the *bhūta-valabhī* suffer from the same fate, whereas the *siṃha-mālā* above the *prastara* is replaced by a row of stuccoed lions of seemingly naturalistic appearance. As usual, the parapet part is adorned with the *hāra*, above which come the copper roofs, followed by a square *grīvā*, also decorated with *hāra* motifs. The upper roof is pyramidal and covered with copper sheets, affixed to the timber-construction. Over the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, the copper roof projects out of the main temple as the *śuka-nāsā*.

As stated above, it is a *sāndhāra* temple having an ambulatory all round. The *garbhagriha* enshrines the standing image of Subrahmaṇya. There is no column inside the sanctum although the *mukha-maṇḍapa* has two pillars. A narrow portico standing on two pillars are in front of the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. The approach to the portico is by means of a flight of five steps, and its granite banisters bear representation of deities like the eight- and four-armed seated Viṣṇu executed in typical Kerala idiom. Associated with the *praṇāla*, having a curved tip, is a standing *bhūta* figure with a mace in one of the hands and the other hand being upraised, holds the *śuṇḍu*-shaped *nāla*. Its *mukha-maṇḍapa*, too, has a *praṇāla* but not much ornamental.

The *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* stands on the same *upapiṭha* as that of the shrine proper. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭhā*. and *paṭṭikā*, There are two concentric rows of pillars—the inner row having four and the outer twelve—carrying a pyramidal roof. The entire complex is surrounded by a *nālabalam* also having roofs covered with copper-sheets.

The temple may be dated stylistically to the seventeenth century.

Kozhikode: Tali temple

(Pls. L A, LI and LII A; figs. 11 and 59)

The Tali temple, situated close to the Zamorin's palace at Calicut, now renamed Kozhikode, must have enjoyed the patronage of the Zamorins in their hey-day. As the available evidence goes, the temple pre-dated the palace which came up immediately to the west of the shrine. Laterite blocks obtained in the excavation of Mananchira tank nearby were utilized in the construction of the palace. Despite the construction of a wall all round it after Albuquerque's raid in 1510 there existed an easy access between the palace and the temple, the latter being the *Ampati-kōvilakam*. This very evidence may tend to show that the temple was built before the start of the sixteenth century. We will revert to this point after giving a brief description of the shrine.

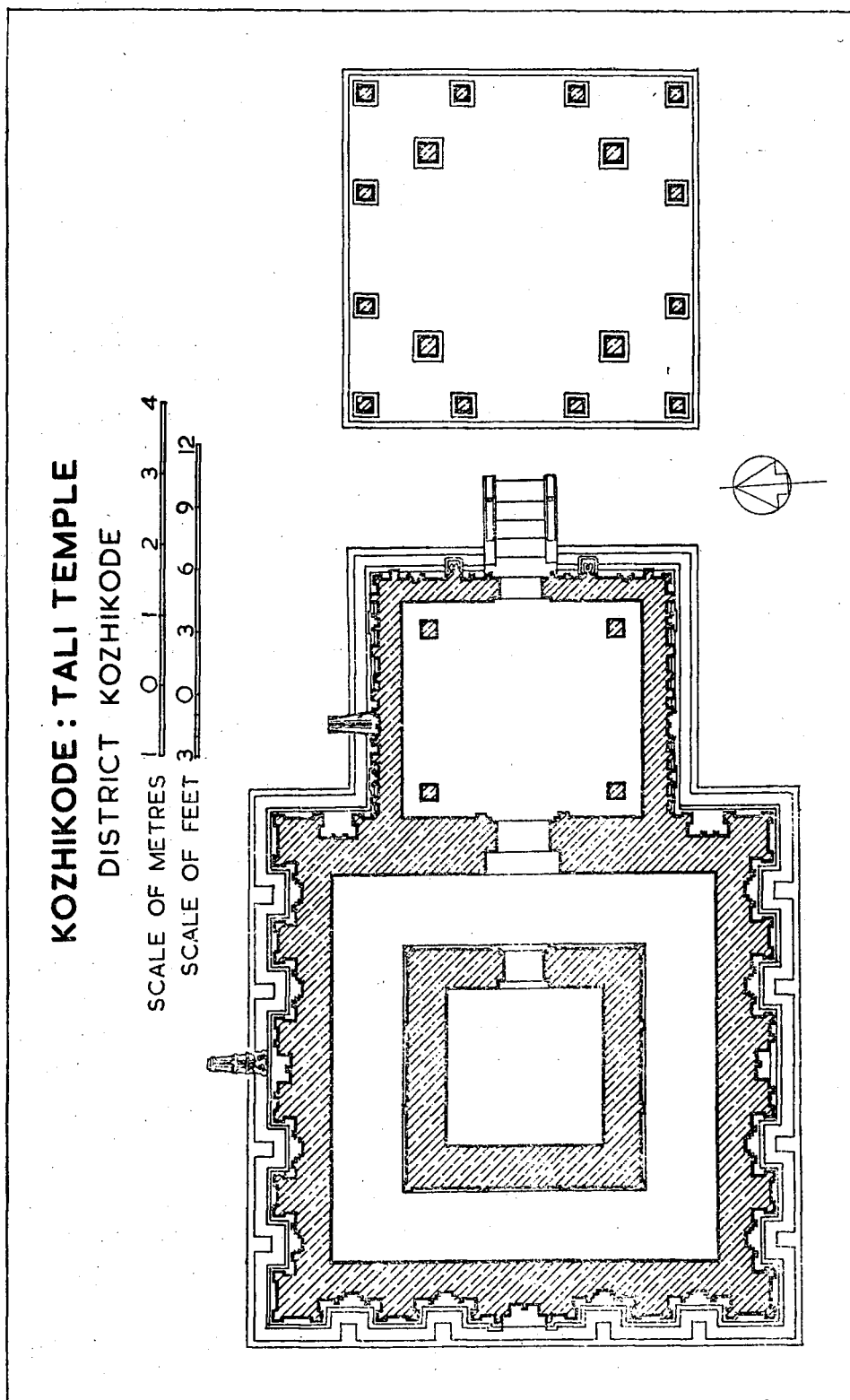


Fig. 59

The temple is a double-storeyed *vimāna* on a square plan and enshrines a Śiva-*liṅga* as its presiding deity. Axially, it consists of square sanctum built of laterite, a projecting *mukha-maṇḍapa*, built entirely of granite, and a detached *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, all facing the east. It is a *sāndhāra*-temple of the traditional type because the *garbha-griha* has no *śikhara* or a superstructure of its own. The *mukha-maṇḍapa*, a four pillared structure, enshrines a *nandi*, and appears to be a later addition in granite. Perhaps this part of the building complex came into existence after the construction of the palace. It also explains the use of laterite in the *garbha-griha*, which must have come up before the nearby site was selected for the Zamorin's palace. All its embellishments, mostly sculptural, were added in the period of active royal patronage.

Though the main sanctum was built of laterite, it was finished with fine murals and stucco-works. In conformity with the general practice, its *adhishṭhāna*, however, is made of granite. Its mouldings consist of *upāna*, short *jagatī*, *vr̥tta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*; its *vedī* shows floral designs alternating with the *pādas*. This type of *adhishṭhāna* is common in the area as it has been noticed at a number of sites like the Śiva temple at Beypore, Nandagōpāla temple at Koduvalli and Viṣṇu temple at Kanniparamba, all being in District Kozhikode. The *praṇāla*, fluted and with ornamental bands, emanates from the *makara*'s mouth, resting on the squarish part of the *vr̥tta-kumuda*. Associated with this *ambu-mārga* is the *bhūta*-figure in a squatting posture; it holds in both the hands a bowl, which collects from the *gō-mukha* the *abhishēka* water. The dwarf, with erect penis, is in the pose of drinking the water from the pot.

Walls of the *garbha-griha* are profusely decorated, mostly with stuccoed ornamentations over the niches and pilasters. All the sham niches have *śālā-śikhara*, while the *ghana-dvāras*, also richly decorated with bosses, besides floral designs and other motifs, are topped by *makara-tōraṇas*. The *kōshṭhas* enclose *jālī*-windows and rise from above the *vedikā*, whereas the *ghana-dvāras* start from above the *paṭṭikā* of the *adhishṭhāna*. Significantly, the *kuḍya-stambhas* carry *pushpa-pōtikā* and these lotus-buds touch the extended *phalakas*, both the features exhibiting later developments. Above the *pushpa-pōtikās* runs a blocking course possibly representing *uttara*. It has a *bhūta-valabhī* overshadowed by a highly ornamental *kapōta*, with bevelled edge; there are *nāsikās* on it enclosing human faces. A row of lions in stucco, showing various poses, on all the sides has replaced the *simha-mālā* above the *ālīnga* part of the *prastara*. The parapet, rising above the *prastara*, shows the usual *hāra*-decoration, which is composed of two *karṇa-kūṭas*, two *śālās* and a *pañjara* in the centre. Over the tiled roof of the first *tala* rises the square *grīvā*, decorated with *kūṭas* and *pañjaras*. The uppermost roof is pyramidal with a *stūpī* as the crowning member. Here is a temple showing in definite terms the six main *aṅgas* of the temple. Walls are painted with themes mostly taken from the Vaishṇava lores, and these might have come into being some time in the seventeenth century when the *Bhakti* movement was at its peak. Images in stucco and wooden bracket figures are also painted.

Now to the *mukha-maṇḍapa*. It is built of granite, and walls have granite images carved out of a block of stone that has been fixed vertically to the wall itself. Such sculptural array is somewhat unusual in a Kerala style of temple. All the images are in standing postures

and include variously the figures of two-armed Sarasvatī holding a *vīṇā*, four-armed Viṣṇu, four-armed Śiva accompanied by *nandī* and a votary, Rāma holding the bow and accompanied by Hanumān, four-armed dancing Śiva, two-armed Bhagavatī holding a long bow and arrow and so on. These sculptures, in high relief, bear unmistakable influence of the Vijayanagara tradition, and may be dated to the sixteenth century. The *mukha-maṇḍapa* is approached by two flights of steps meeting at a common landing and screened by a granite *phalaka*.

To the south-eastern corner of the temple stands a small shrine dedicated to Kṛishṇa. Made entirely of granite it has only *ghana-dvāra* closely flanked by a *kuḍya-stambha* on either side, in the centre of the wall and the corner pilasters. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vr̥tta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*, followed by *vēdī*.

As already hinted, the temple seems to have an earlier beginning than the Zamorin's palace. Evidently, it has to be dated prior to A.D. 1500. At the same time, it cannot be very much earlier, since Marco Polo, who visited Kerala towards the close of the thirteenth century did not mention the temple as well as the kingdom of Calicut. Most likely, the temple came up with the rise of Calicut whose earliest reference is in the accounts of the African traveller Ibn Baṭuta (1342-47). Considering all this, the beginning of the temple may be dated some time in the early part of the fifteenth century.

Chengannur: Narasimha temple

(Pl. LVI; figs. 11 and 60)

Chengannur, in Chengannur Taluk, District Alleppey, has a number of important shrines like the Mahādēva temple, Kunnathumalai or Kunnumēl Śiva temple and the Śāttankulaṅkarai Narasimha temple and so on. Evidently, it was an important centre of religion though its antiquity may not go as far back as the temples of Kandiur and Kaviur in the same District. Inscriptional evidence from the place also does not take us back much earlier, for the earliest inscription from the place, coming from the Kunnumēl Śiva temple, now completely renovated, is dated to Kollam 663 (A.D. 1465).¹ It is quite likely that the Śāttankulaṅkara temple was renovated near about the same time.² An inscription from this temple speaks of one Dēvaṅ Śaṅkaraṅ of Mēlkkāḍu who repaired the temple, and provided funds, offered by several people, for the feeding on all *dvādaśī* days.

The Śāttankulaṅkarai Narasimha temple, facing the west, is built mainly of wood and is an example of a *sama-chaturāśra kshudra-vimāna*, fronted by a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. Standing on a *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna*, the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* has a tiled pyramidal roof while the main shrine has its roof covered with copper. The entire complex is, as usual, surrounded

¹ Poduval (1941). *op. cit.*, p. 33.

² However, the inscription on palaeographical grounds has been dated to the fourteenth century. See *Travancore Archaeological Series*, IV, pp. 161-66.

by a *nālabalam*. On the whole, it is a small compact unit, without much alteration or addition in later times.

The entrance into the shrine is through a flight of steps with *hasti-hasta* banisters on either side, each one carved with a seated *gaṇa* figure, representing *śankha-nidhi* and *padma-nidhi*. Further, on either side of the entrance is a wooden *dvāra-pāla* standing on a granite pedestal. On plan, the shrine consists of a square temple enclosing a square *garbha-griha* with a *pradakṣiṇā-patha* all round. The *garbha-griha* is in the form of a miniature shrine, as it has its own octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*, crowned by a *stūpī*. At each of the four corners of the *garbha-griha* is to be seen a column. It is worth-noting that the *garbha-griha*, too, has its own entrance.

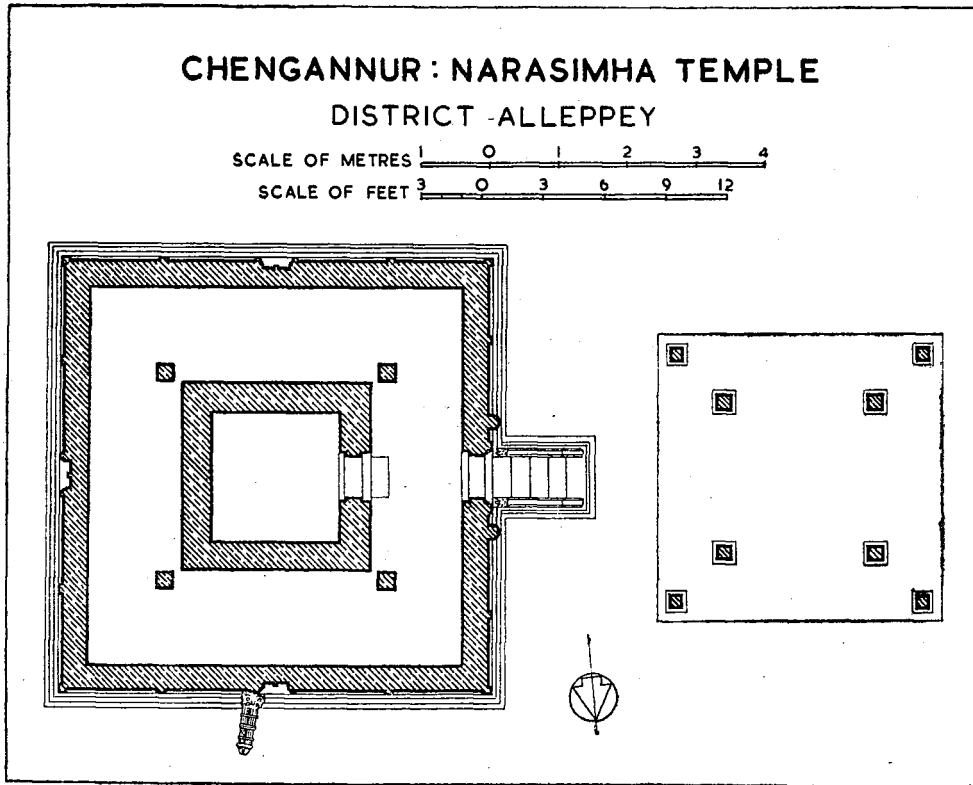


FIG. 60

The *adhishṭhāna* of the sanctum's outer wall or *bāhya-bhitti* is also of granite, and the mouldings comprise *upāna*, a short *jagatī*, *vṛtta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *simha-mālā* and *paṭṭikā*. Above it comes the *vēdikā* followed by *bhitti*, the latter made entirely of wood, and that too, carved beautifully with various *Paurāṇic* scenes. Walls have also *jālī*-windows, *dēva-kōshṭhas* and animal friezes. In fact, just above the *vēdikā* runs a frieze of animal procession, followed by another horizontal frieze of *vimāna*-motifs. These friezes discontinue whenever *dēva-kōshṭhas* intervene. Over the frieze come the *jālī*-windows and vertical panels with *Paurāṇic* scenes. The temple has four functional doors, each one associated with *dvāra-pālās*; the *lalāṭa-bimba* of each of the doors has the representation of Durgā.

Wood-carvings of the wall are excellent pieces of art delineating in minute details various scenes arranged generally in horizontal registers. On the western wall are depicted scenes from *Kṛishṇa-līlā* like *Kṛishṇa's* stealing of butter, *Kṛishṇa* in the midst of cows and so on. Other carvings include eight-armed *Vishṇu* carried by *Garuḍa* in the pose of *Gajēndra-anugrahamūrti*. In the *dēva-kōshṭha* is enshrined the figure of *Narasimha* tearing the entrails of *Hiraṇya*. Another *dēva-kōshṭha* of the western wall contains the carving of *Narasimha* in *yōgāsana*. In three registers is shown also the story of *Kirātārjunīya*. Similarly, another vertical panel depicts the scenes of *Pūtanā-vadha*, *Kṛishṇa* killing elephant, *Baka* and the Serpent *Kāliya*. Also portrayed are the figures of *Śiva*, *Brahmā*, *Vishṇu*, *Gaṇēśa*, *Subrahmaṇya* and *Bhagavatī*.

The northern half of the eastern wall is devoted mainly to the story of *sētu-bandhana*. One of the *dēva-kōshṭhas* here has the representation of *Kṛishṇa* killing *Dhēnukāsura*. To the south of the eastern door is a niche enshrining the figure of *Gaṇēśa*. One of the vertically-arranged panels exhibits, in five registers, the *Daśāvatāras* of *Vishṇu*. Also to be seen is the figure of *Anantaśāyī* form of *Vishṇu* below a *jālaka*. Of various decorative elements, all being in timber, the *jālakas* occupy the maximum space; other elements comprise vertically-aligned panels, *dēva-kōshṭhas*, and ornamental *kudya-stambhas*.

The same arrangement continues also on the southern wall. Its easternmost panel displays in three registers *Śiva-Pārvatī*, *Gaṇēśa*, and *Naṭarāja*; the dance of *Śiva* is being witnessed by various gods like *Vishṇu*, *Brahmā*, *Subrahmaṇya* and perhaps *Kālī* carried on a female mount. The second panel from the east exhibits three scenes pertaining to *Sītā's* sojourn in *Aśōka-vana*. In the *dēva-kōshṭha* of the wall is enshrined the figure of *Kṛishṇa* drinking milk directly from the teat of the cow's udder. On either side of the niche is seen a *ghana-dvāra* with the *lalāṭa-bimba* showing *Śiva-Pārvatī*. The western half of the southern wall has three *jālī*-windows, the central one being most conspicuous because of the occurrence of a *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with corns. A *yakshī* below a tree is shown in the *dēva-kōshṭha* in the centre of the western half of the wall. To the west of it is a series of panel showing *Gajāntakamūrti*, *Śiva* rescuing *Mārkaṇḍēya* and so on.

Wood-sculptures on the northern wall include *Kṛishṇa* playing on the flute, enshrined in a *dēva-kōshṭha*, *vastra-haraṇa*, and figures of various gods and goddesses. A detailed analysis of these themes and multitudes of decorative motifs may easily constitute a separate study of its own.

Below the functional door of the northern wall is placed the *praṇāla* in the form of a fluted *suṇḍu* with three ornamental bands. As usual, it is held in the *simha's* mouth, and its *gō-mukha* rests on the head of the *bhūta* figure shown in standing posture.

The *prastara* of the temple is also highly ornate. On the *valabhī* is carved the scene of *samudra-manthana* in continuous succession, besides some more scenes from the *Purāṇas*. The *kapōta*, juxtaposed between the *adho*- and the *ūrdhva-padmas*, is equally ornamental; it is adorned with *nāsikās* in the usual fashion.

Undoubtedly, it is a storehouse of sculptural art in wood. The arrangement of panels and myriad of decorative elements bear close similarity with those of the murals, which

was influenced more by the tradition of wood-sculpture, than any other form of sculptural art. Considering the stylistic features these reliefs may, however, be dated to the fifteenth century when the temple in the present form came into existence.

3. CIRCULAR SHRINE

A. GENERAL

Circular *vimānas* continued to be raised or re-built during the Late phase despite its absence in other regions of south India. But not all such temples were built in Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style because there are definite evidence of circular temples raised in Drāviḍa style as well; and significantly, all such examples come only from south Kerala. A few *Śilpa*-texts that were written during the time also refers to the mode of construction of circular *vimānas*. Nārāyaṇa, the author of the *Tantrasamuchchaya*, who was born in the Kali year 4529 corresponding to A.D. 1426, refers to the *vṛitta-prāsāda* in rather stereotyped manner; it is just a cursory glance compared to its notices in the early texts like the *Bṛīhat-Saṃhitā*. On the other hand, the post-*Tantrasamuchchaya* works like the *Śilparatna* of Śrī Kumāra give detailed description and classification of the circular temples. The *Śilparatna*, which contains extracts from the *Tantrasamuchchaya*, is ascribable to the sixteenth century, when the popularity of the circular shrines might have reached a new high. Nevertheless, it has to be accepted that the new trend began from the fifteenth century itself; such a conclusion can at least be confirmed by some inscriptional data. For instance, the Śaṅkara-nārāyaṇamūrti temple at Navaikulam, near Attingal, was renovated in A.D. 1439. But the repairs to the Śiva temple at Ettumanur began in Kollam 717 and ended in 720 (A.D. 1545). Again, the renovation of the Śiva temple at Vazhapalli, in District Kottayam, was completed in Kollam 840 (A.D. 1665). These instances show the continued interest that the people took in the maintenance of the circular shrines even in the Late phase. It remained a familiar architectural form which eventually influenced even the pure Drāviḍa tradition as can be gleaned from the Valaya-Udayēśvaram temple at Valaya-Udayadichchapuram, a suburb of Trivandrum, and the temple of Paraśurāma and others shrines in the Paraśurāmēśvara temple-complex at Tiruvallam.

B. DRĀVIḌA

(i) GENERAL

The Drāviḍa style of circular *vimānas* appeared for the first time in the Late phase, and as such, these constitute the latest series, so to say, of circular temples in India. The temple at Valaya-Udayadichchapuram, referred to above, has a graceful elevation reproducing broadly the curves of the Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa *vimānas*. It is a unique example since it is the only *tritala-vimāna* built on circular plan. At the same time, it has to be agreed that the number of circular Drāviḍa shrines is too small and its emergence must have been inspired by the indigenous Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style, so widespread in south Kerala.

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Tiruvallam: Paraśurāmēśvara temple

(Pl. LXVIII B; figs. 17 and 61)

The Paraśurāmēśvara temple-complex at Tiruvallam, near Trivandrum, is the meeting ground of both the Keraḷa and the Drāviḍa styles. Within the inner enclosure stand the shrines dedicated to Paraśurāmēśvara, Brahmā and Śiva, apart from the one meant to enshrine Matsyamūrti, Vēdavyāsa and Subrahmaṇya. All the four shrines are surrounded by the *nāḷambalam*. Outside the *nāḷambalam*, on the eastern side, are located the shrines for Lord Kṛishṇa, Mahā-Gaṇapati and Śāstā. Of these shrines, the ones dedicated to Paraśurāma, Brahmā and Matsyamūrti are in the Drāviḍa style.

Circular, or more precisely *ghaṭa*-shaped¹ on plan, the Paraśurāma temple is built of granite up to the *kaṇṭa* level, beyond which rises the brick superstructure. Facing the north, the temple possibly stands on an older *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, short *jagatī*,

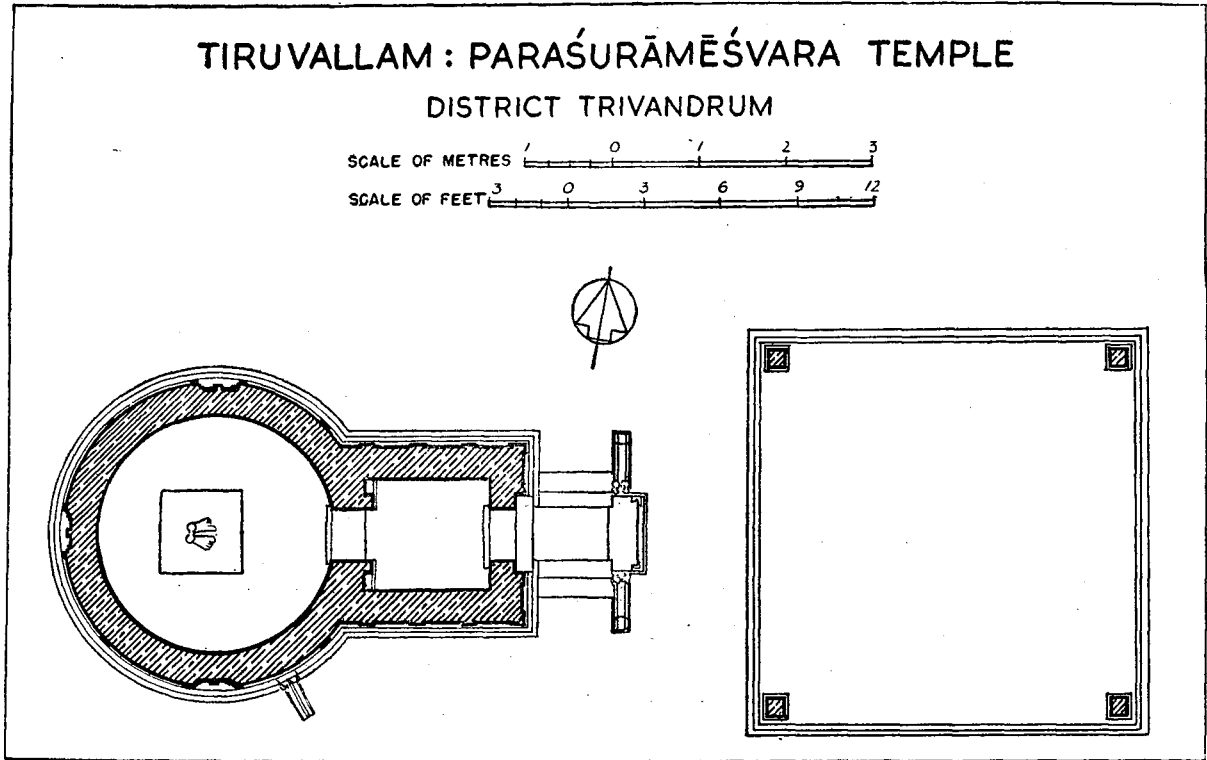


FIG. 61

¹ As per the textual description it should be in the shape of a pitcher. The Paraśurāmēśvara shrine has a small porch projecting out, like a neck, of the circular outline. For description of the *ghaṭa-prāsāda*, see H. Sarkar (1971), *op. cit.*, 270-79.

octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* and *paṭṭikā*; it is followed by *vēdikā*, also showing the *pādas*. But for the *kuḍya-stambhas* and *ghana-dvāras*, the wall is plain and simple. Each of the *makara-t raṇas* above the *ghana-dvāras* shows a divinity in the centre: Narasimha on the west, Dakṣiṇāmūrti on the south and Indra on the east. The *kuḍya-stambhas* have very developed type of *pushpa-pōtikās*, which look more like plantain flower than lotus-bud. In the *prastara* are to be seen *valabhī* with *bhūta-mālā* while the *kap ta* has *kūḍas* enclosing human face. On the top of the *āditala* runs the frieze of animal figures, mostly lion. The circular *grīvā* has, within *grīvā-kōshṭhas*, the stucco images of Brahmā, Indra, Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Narasimha respectively on the north, east, south and west. It is an arrangement almost universal in Kērala's temple-architecture. Above the circular *grīvā* stands the circular *śikhara*, domical in appearance, with *nāsikās* on four sides. The interior of the shrine is divided into circular *garbha-griha*, with the standing image of Paraśurāma, and narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa* that projects out of the sanctum. It is a *nirandhāra*-shrine without a *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* inside. In front of the temple stands the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, with a pyramidal roof.

To the east of the Paraśurāma shrine stands the shrine for Brahmā, and it is an *ekatala Drāviḍa-vimāna*, which is square from the *adhishṭhāna* to *śikhara*. Its *adhishṭhāna* is of the *mañcha* variety. Brahmā with four heads and four hands is seated on a *padmāsana*; *kamaṇḍalu* and lotus flower are in two of the four hands, the other two being in the *yōga-mudrā* pose. The shrine has yielded three inscriptions dated variously to Kollam 399, 411 and 412.

Next to the Brahmā shrine is a circular Śiva shrine built in typical Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style. It faces the east and carries a tiled conical roof. The *adhishṭhāna* consists of *uṇāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. Both *kaṇṭha* and *vēdī* have *pādas*. Walls are decorated with *kuḍya-stambhas*, and *ghana-dvāras*, the latter having the *makara-t raṇas* on top. Inside the temple is housed a square Drāviḍa-vimāna as the *garbha-griha*: it has an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*. Along the *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* all round, there are eight stone columns, with wooden base. Both the inner and the outer walls are made of granite. In front of the Śiva shrine is the square *nandi-maṇḍapa*.

To the north of the *nandi-maṇḍapa*, mentioned above, is the shrine dedicated to Matsyamūrti, Vēdavyāsa and Subrahmaṇya. It is also an example of *ekatala kshudra-vimāna* of the Drāviḍa variety, with square *grīvā* and *śikhara*.

The shrines outside the *nāḷambalam* are not of any architectural significance except the fact that the temple for Śāstā is an open-air structure, similar to the widespread Nāga shrines meant for housing the votive *nāga* figures. There are two *dhvaṇa-stambhas* outside the inner *prākāra*, one for the Śiva and the other for the Paraśurāma shrine.

The temple is generally dated either to the thirteenth or to the seventeenth century. Inscriptions on the *adhishṭhānas*, as stated above, range in dates from Kollam 399 (A.D. 1224) to 412 (A.D. 1237).¹ Thus the epigraphical evidence provides middle of the twelfth century as the date of the nucleus of this establishment. These inscriptions come mostly

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, III, pp. 37-44.

from the Brahmā shrine, and the earliest of them, belonging to the reign of the Vēṇāḍu ruler Vīra Kēraḷavarman, refers to the gods Mahādēva, Tirukkaṇṇappar and Gaṇapati. It is, then, likely that the Paraśurāma shrine came afterwards, perhaps in the late seventeenth century, as its stylistic features exhibit.

Valaya-Udayadichchapuram: Śrī Valaya-Udayēśvaram temple

(Pl. LXIX; fig. 62)

Situated in the suburb of Trivandrum, the Valaya-Udayēśvaram temple is one of the finest circular shrines of south India. It has a majestic appearance, yet not endowed with any lavish decorative elements. The temple is circular from base to the top, and belongs to the category of the Drāviḍa tradition though considerably modified by

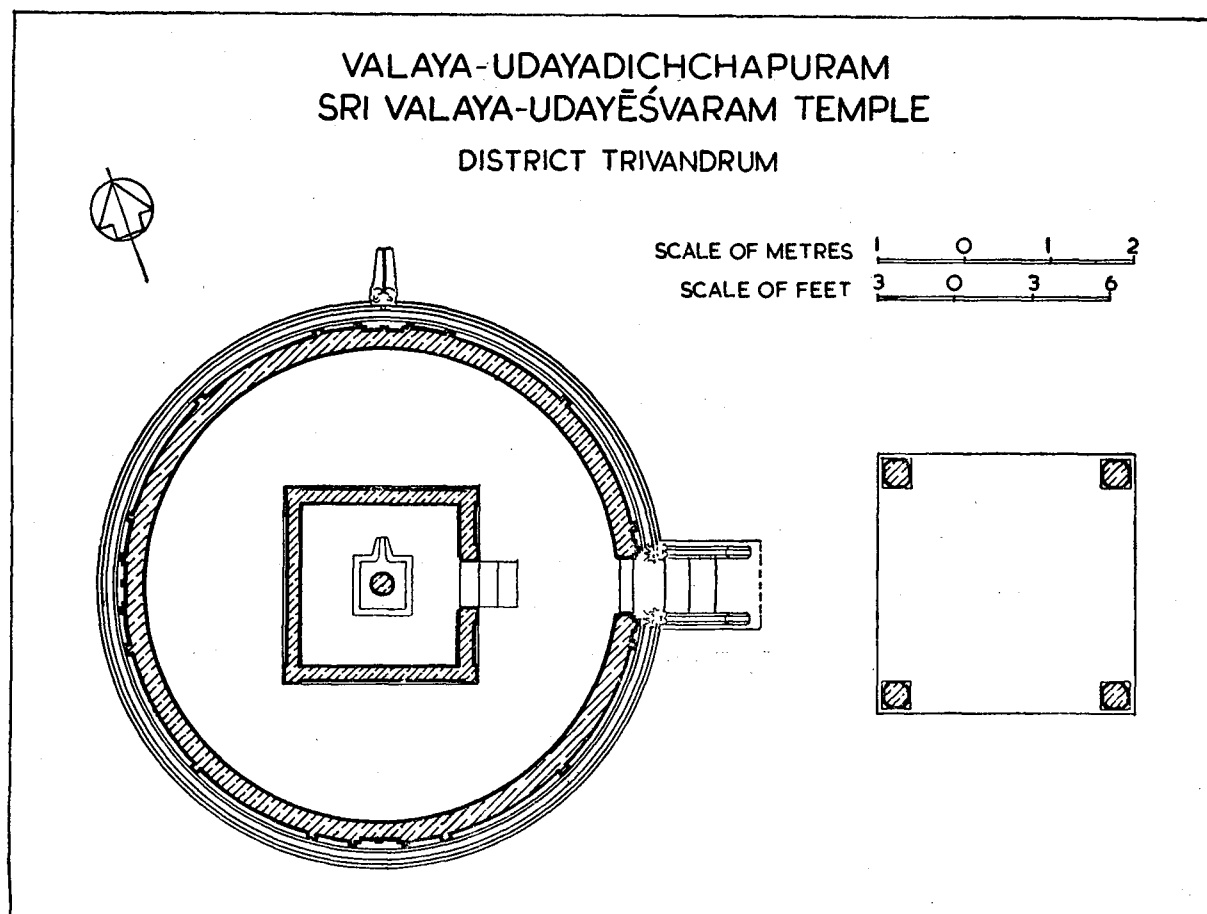


FIG. 62

the form and features of the Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style. It is a *sāndhāra-vimāna*, which faces the east, and houses a square *garbha-griha*, with a *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* all round.

The square *garbha-griha* is itself an example of miniature Drāviḍa-*vimāna*. Its *adhishṭhāna* consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. If it possesses any superstructure it is now concealed behind the ceiling but undoubtedly the roof of the *garbha-griha* is made of stepped arches. There is a *pradakṣiṇā-paṭha* all round but it does not have any columns. The deity enshrined is a *liṅga* mounted on a square *pīṭha*.

The *bāhya-bhitti* of the temple is built entirely of granite. Its granite-built *adhishṭhāna* is made of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *gala-pādas* and *kampas*, *valabhi* and *kapōta*. Decorated alternately with *pādas* and floral designs, its *vēdikā* is also very impressive. The circular wall shows three *ghana-dvāras*, flanked on either side by *kudya-stambhas*. It appears that the stone-construction above the *adhishṭhāna* is a later renovation. Curiously, mouldings like *valabhi* etc., are not to be seen despite the occurrence of a prominent *kapōta*, embellished with *nāsikās*. The superstructure above the *prastara* is built of bricks showing two *talas*, each one having a *hāra* of its own. It has a circular *grīvā* and *śikhara*, the latter pinnacled by a metal *stūpī*.

The temple is fronted by a square *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* which has a *mañcha* type of *adhishṭhāna*. It seems to have undergone renovation in recent times. This is also the case with the *sōpāna*, edged as usual by stone *phalakas*. Even the inner shrine has a flight of steps but without the banisters.

Outside the *prākāra*, on the south-western corner, is a subsidiary shrine for Śāstā. By the side of the seated figure of Śāstā has been placed a small image of Gaṇapati. Two subsidiary shrines are dedicated to Brahma-rākshasa and Vīra-rākshasa.

The temple is generally dated to the sixteenth century but may be earlier by at least a century. In this connexion, the *praṇāla* of the temple assumes considerable significance. The channelled shaft has facets but not flutings and issues out of the *simha's* mouth. It ends in a lipped terminal or *gō-mukha*. This is a type which became popular in the twelfth century. One cannot, at the same time, exclude the possibility of its being an earlier survival. Still it may indicate the presence of an earlier nucleus. If that be the case the antiquity of the site has to be placed in the Middle Phase though the extant remains may be ascribed to the fifteenth century.

C. DRĀVIḌA-KĒRALA

(i) GENERAL

Enough has been written in the preceding pages about the circular Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa temples, the popularity of which reached its zenith in the Middle phase. Whatever examples that are being described below had their beginning at least in the Middle phase but these were rebuilt unmistakably, as the associated epigraphs say, in the Late phase. Curiously, no circular shrine is known from north Malabar, an area where the circular form failed to gain much ground. All the circular temples of this period have, however, several subsidiary structures, arranged in a centripetal layout around the principal shrine.

NAVAIKULAM : ŚAṆKARANĀRĀYAṆA TEMPLE

DISTRICT TRIVANDRUM

SCALE OF METRES 2 1 0 2 4

SCALE OF FEET 4 3 2 1 0 4 8

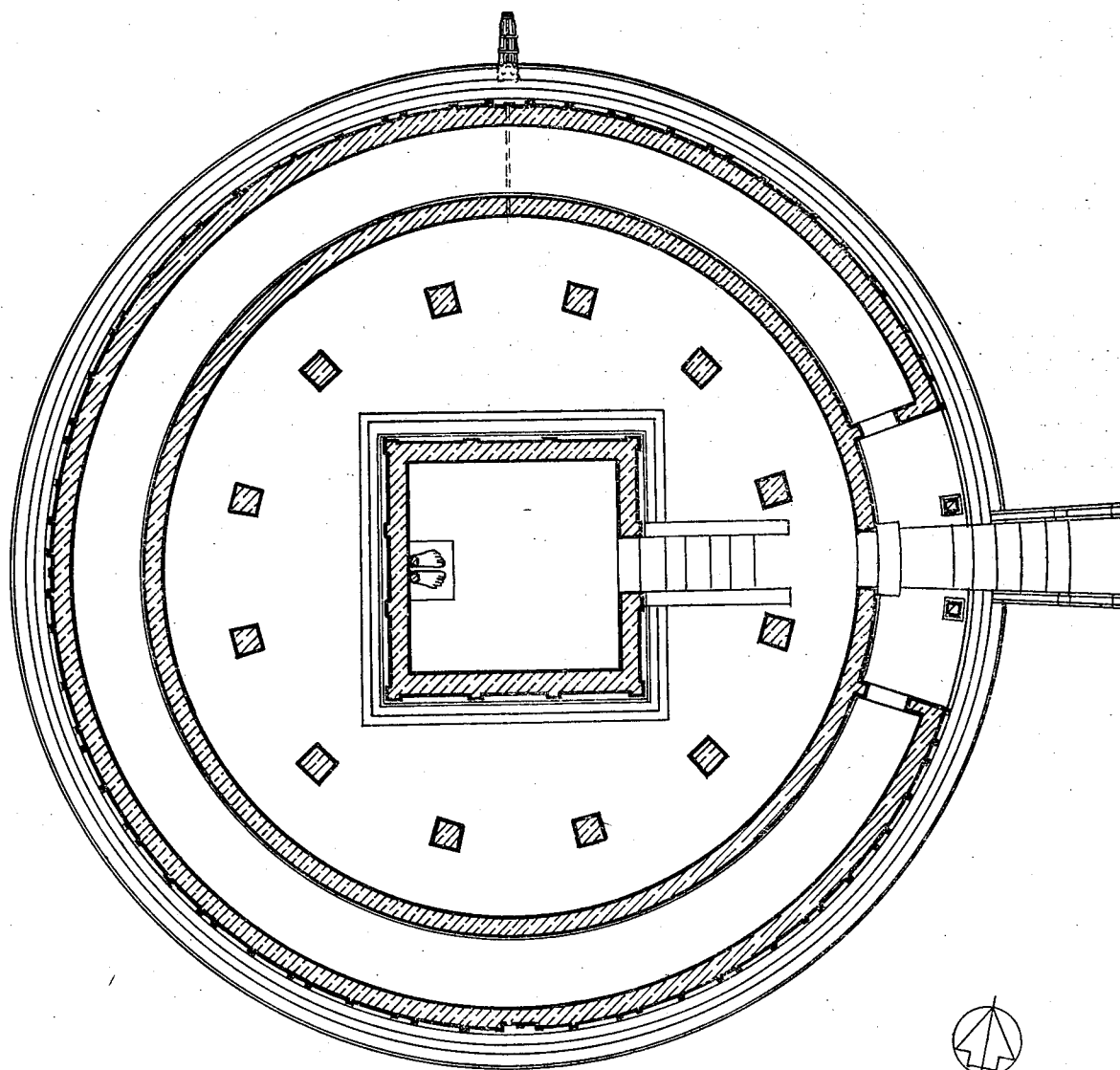


FIG. 63

(ii) DESCRIPTION

Navaikulam: Śrī Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa temple

(Figs. 11 and 63)

The Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa temple at Navaikulam, in Chirayinkil Taluk of District Trivandrum, enshrines the syncretic image of Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa whose left half shows the attributes of Viṣṇu and the right side those of Śiva. It is a temple-complex, built of granite and has a number of granite sub-shrines. Built on a circular plan, the temple, facing the east, is an example of *ekatala-vimāna* but it is approached through an impressive *balikkal-maṇḍapa* associated with sculptured columns and beautiful images of the late Vijayanagara or Nāyaka plastic tradition. Here there is a definite predominance of the use of granite because the *nālambalam*, *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* and other subsidiary structures are built of this variety of stone.

The temple was renovated undoubtedly in Kollam 614 (A.D. 1439), as can be gathered from the inscription engraved on the *kumuda* of the *adhishṭhāna*. According to the text of the inscription the temple and the *maṇḍapa* were built in stone, and the central shrine having been covered with copper-plate in that year itself. The *kumbhābhishēka* was performed by the king Śrī Vira-Rāma Mārttāṇḍavarmaṇ Tiruvaḍi of Jayatuṅganāḍu and Kīlappērūr *illam*.¹ It appears from the epigraph that the roof was covered with copper-plate but at present it carries a roof made of older tiles which are not in use nowadays. The other dated inscription, engraved on the *balikkal*, is very much damaged but the date, Kollam 782 (A.D. 1607) is clear. Perhaps the *balikkal-maṇḍapa* was added to it in this year by a private individual Kumaraṇ-Kaṇḍaṇ of Ēṇa-nāḍu. The *sapta-mātri-bali* stone bears the donative record of another individual, Mādhavaṇ-Śaṅkaraṇ.²

The principal shrine is a *sāndhāra-vimāna* and its *bāhya-bhitti* has an *adhishṭhāna* composed of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with *gala-pādas* and various animal motifs and *paṭṭikā*. Above it runs the *vēdikā* with floral designs alternating with the *pādas*. The *praṇāḷa* comes out of the *kaṇṭha* of the *adhishṭhāna* and is not associated with a *bhūta* figure; it has an open *jalāyana* though the fluted shaft is in the form of a *śuṇḍu* with median bands.

The *bhitti* has usual decorative elements, simple and subdued. It has two functional doors, one on the east and the other on the west. The wall is also relieved with *kudya-stambhas* associated with *pushpa-pōtikās*, *ghana-dvāras*, false niches with *śālā-śikhara*.

The circular shrine encloses a square *garbha-griha* made of granite. It has its own flight of steps and encircled by a row of twelve columns along the inner ambulatory. The *adhishṭhāna* of the inner shrine, carrying an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*, consists of

¹Travancore Archaeological Series, I, pt. XVI, p. 299.

²Ibid., VI, p. 83.

upāna, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*, followed as usual by a *vēdī*. It is worth-noting that the walls of inner shrine exhibit *kudya-stambhas* with bevelled corbels. Apart from the *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* around the *garbha-griha*, it has another ambulatory cut off completely from the interior of the shrine. This ambulatory is approachable from the portico through a wooden door; similar arrangement is noticed in the Śiva temple at Kaviyur and Ettumanur. In fact, this type of layout is very common in southern Kerala.

The sub-shrines include Gaṇapati shrine, facing the west, Śāstā temple, a shrine for Yakshī and Bhagavatī shrine, all the three facing the east. Both Yakshī and Bhagavatī are represented by stone.

It has not only a *prākāra* but also a *viḷakkumāḍam*, the latter meant for fixing lamps.

Ettumanur : Śiva temple

(Pls. LX and LXIV A; figs. 11, 15 and 64)

Famous for the giant-sized panel of Naṭarāja, painted on the inner wall of the main *gōpura*, the Śiva temple of Ettumanur, in Kottayam District, occupies an extensive area, and

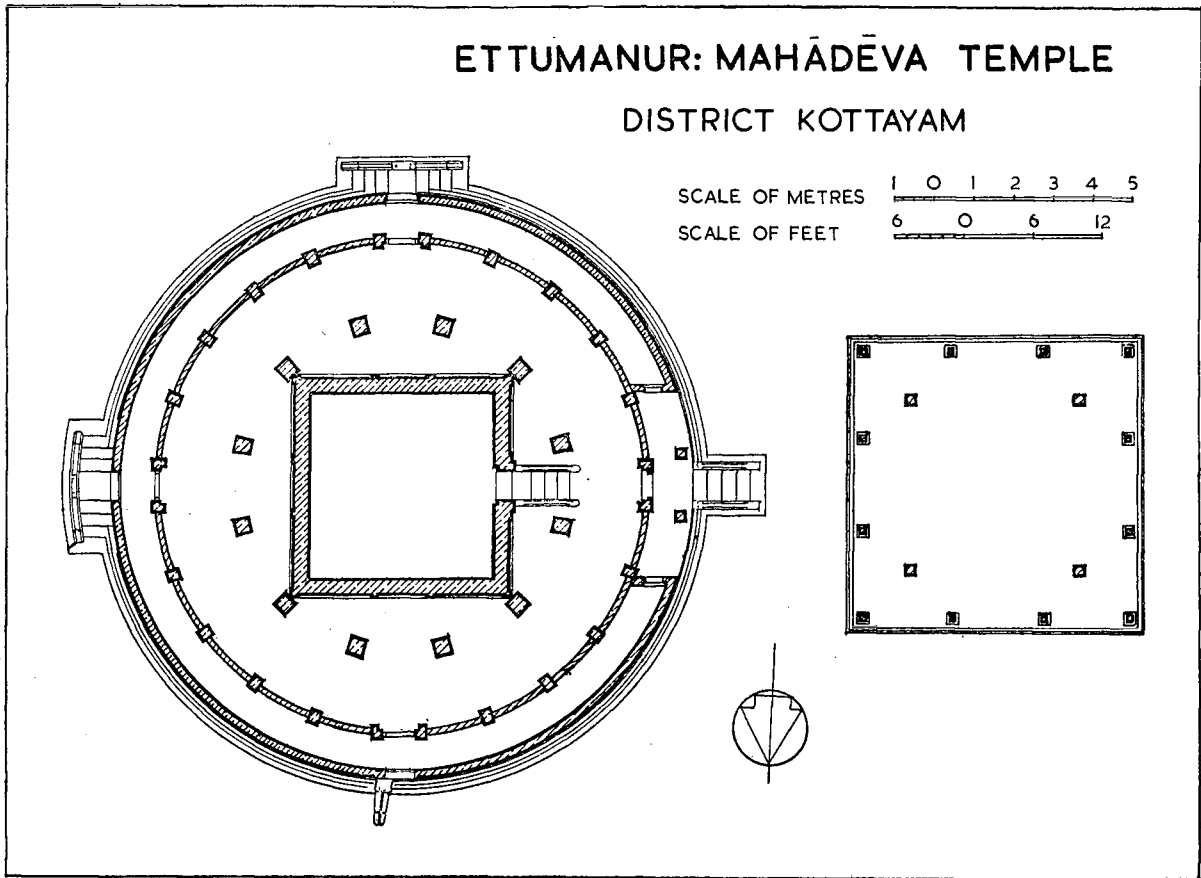


FIG. 64

yet appears to be a well-knit structural complex. It is a single-storyed circular shrine built mainly of wood; the timber-built roof is covered with copper-plates. All the roofs, including those of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* and *nālabalam*, are of identical type.

The circular temple, facing the west, is approached by a flight of steps flanked by *hasti-hasta* banisters, carved with beautiful figures including a Natarāja. In front of the doorway is an open space used as the portico, which provides access to the outermost *pradakṣhiṇā-patha*. The actual entrance into the shrine proper is through the second circular wall. Inside the inner circle stands the *garbha-griha*, a miniature Drāviḍa-*vimāna* of granite, surrounded by a row of twelve columns. The square *garbha-griha* has its own *sōpāna*, and carries an octagonal *śikhara*.

The outermost circular wall is built of wood though set up on a granite *adhishṭhāna* of the *kapōta-bandha* type. Below the *adhishṭhāna* can be noticed a small *upapīṭha* of four mouldings of which *padma* is the most conspicuous. Individual mouldings of the *adhishṭhāna* consist of *upāna*, a short *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, with *kampas* and *gala-pādas*, *valabhī*, undecorated *kapōta*, and *prati*. Above the *adhishṭhāna* comes the *vēdikā*, followed by a wooden frieze showing animal procession. The latter is again succeeded by another continuous frieze depicting the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. These are excellent examples of minute carvings, displaying both technical skill and artistic sensitivity. The wall above the frieze is in the form of screens or *jālakas*, punctuated by small niches, enshrining wooden images. Below these niches runs a short composition portraying animal procession. Even the pilasters are of wood. Encircling the entire temple are hung wooden bracket figures, about twenty in number; they include both male and female figures as well as various deities. Of the *prastara*, most prominent mouldings are *valabhī* and *kapōta*, also made of wood. The *valabhī* contains fine carvings depicting scenes like the *samudra-manthana*, battle scenes and processions, and scenes of dance and merriments.

It is a *sarvatōbhadra* temple with four openings, three of which are associated with their own *sōpāna*, though all of them having a pair of *dvāra-pālas*. These openings correspond to those of the second circular wall and the walls of the square inner sanctum. In other words, the plan simulates the *chaturmukha* shrines of the Jaina tradition. That is why the *liṅga* in the centre can be viewed from all the four directions. There is no flight of steps for the northern door, flanked on either side by wooden *dvāra-pālas*. It is because of the occurrence of the *praṇāla* issuing out of the *simha's* mouth. Taking the shape of a fluted *śuṇḍu* with ornamental bands, its *gō-mukha* rests on the head of a seated dwarf, shown in the attitude of blowing a conch. The eastern entrance has two lateral flights of steps meeting at a common landing; the stone banister that screens it bears fine carvings in the form of female dancing figures accompanied by a drummer and cymbal-bearer. The *dvāra-pālas* are examples of wood-sculpture. Similar types of *sōpāna* and *dvāra-pāla* figures adorn also the southern entrance.

The *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* of the temple is of an ornate variety and is interesting from several points of view. Its pyramidal roof stands in sharp contrast to the gigantic conical roof of the main shrine. That the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* is the metamorphosed version of the *nandi-maṇḍapa* is evident from the presence of two figures of *nandi* here. Its wooden ceiling

is highly decorative having a panel of twenty-five divine figures. An interesting feature is the ascription of divinity to wooden columns. Thus the north-eastern and the north-western pillars here, housed separately in their respective wooden enclosures, are being worshipped as *Yakshī* and *Bhagavatī* respectively.

There are definite evidence to show that the temple was rebuilt in the sixteenth century. An inscription on the *adhishṭhāna* states that the repair began in Kollam 717 (A.D. 1542) and the consecration ceremony took place in Kollam 720 (A.D. 1545). One of the copper bulls kept in the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* is the gift, as the epigraph on it shows, of one *Dēvanārāyaṇa*; it is dated in Kollam 876 (A.D. 1701). The latest known record, of Kollam 1063 (A.D. 1888), speaks of the setting up of the *dhvaja-stambha* by a Dewan of a Travancore ruler.¹

Tiruvalattur : Bhagavatī temple

(Pl. LXII B; figs. 11 and 65)

Locally known as *Eraṇḍu Mūrti Ammaṇ Kōvil*, of Tiruvalattur, District Palghat, it is a large structural complex with two circular shrines, both meant for *Bhagavatī*. Each of them facing the west has a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* in front. It is an example of a temple with *pañcha-prākāra*. One has to reach both the shrines after passing through the two *prākāras*. These two, added with the *nālabalam*, *bāhya-bhitti* and the *āntara-bhitti*, constitute the five *prākāras*, outermost being pierced by a tall *gōpura*. It is the bigger shrine, situated on a higher ground, that faces the *gōpura*. The smaller shrine is without a real gateway; and moreover, it is located on a low ground.

Of the two circular shrines, the bigger one encloses a square *garbha-griha* in the form of a miniature *Drāviḍa* shrine. On the contrary, the smaller one is without it, and hence, belongs to the category of *nirandhāra*-temple. Evidently, the former is a *dvitala sāndhāra-vimāna*, which was renovated, as the inscription on the *adhishṭhāna* says, by a descendant of one *Surēśa* after it was burnt down.² Palaeographically, the inscription may be ascribed to the sixteenth century. In all likelihood, the present structure, by and large, belongs to the same period.

The bigger temple as well as its *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* stand on a common *upapīṭha* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas* and *paṭṭikā*. As it is without a *kumuda*, it has to be classed as of the *mañchaka* type. Notwithstanding this common *upapīṭha*, the *adhishṭhāna* of the shrine proper differs from that of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*. In the case of the latter, mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*; indeed, it is the commonest type of *adhishṭhāna* for the *namaskāra-maṇḍapas* of Kerala, the other variety being of the *mañcha* type. The shrine, however, possesses a much elaborate *adhishṭhāna* with mouldings like *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas*, *valabhī*,

¹ *Travancore Archaeological Series*, VII, pp. 139-40. Also Poduval (1941), pp. 51-52.

² *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*, 1928-29, no. 455.

kapōta, *kaṇṭha* and *simha-mālā*; it is; followed by *vēdikā*. Human faces within the *nāsikās* of the *kapōta* look like masked ones, perhaps in imitation of some familiar dance-tradition. It is further interesting to note that the *praṇāla* is juxtaposed between the *kapōta* and the

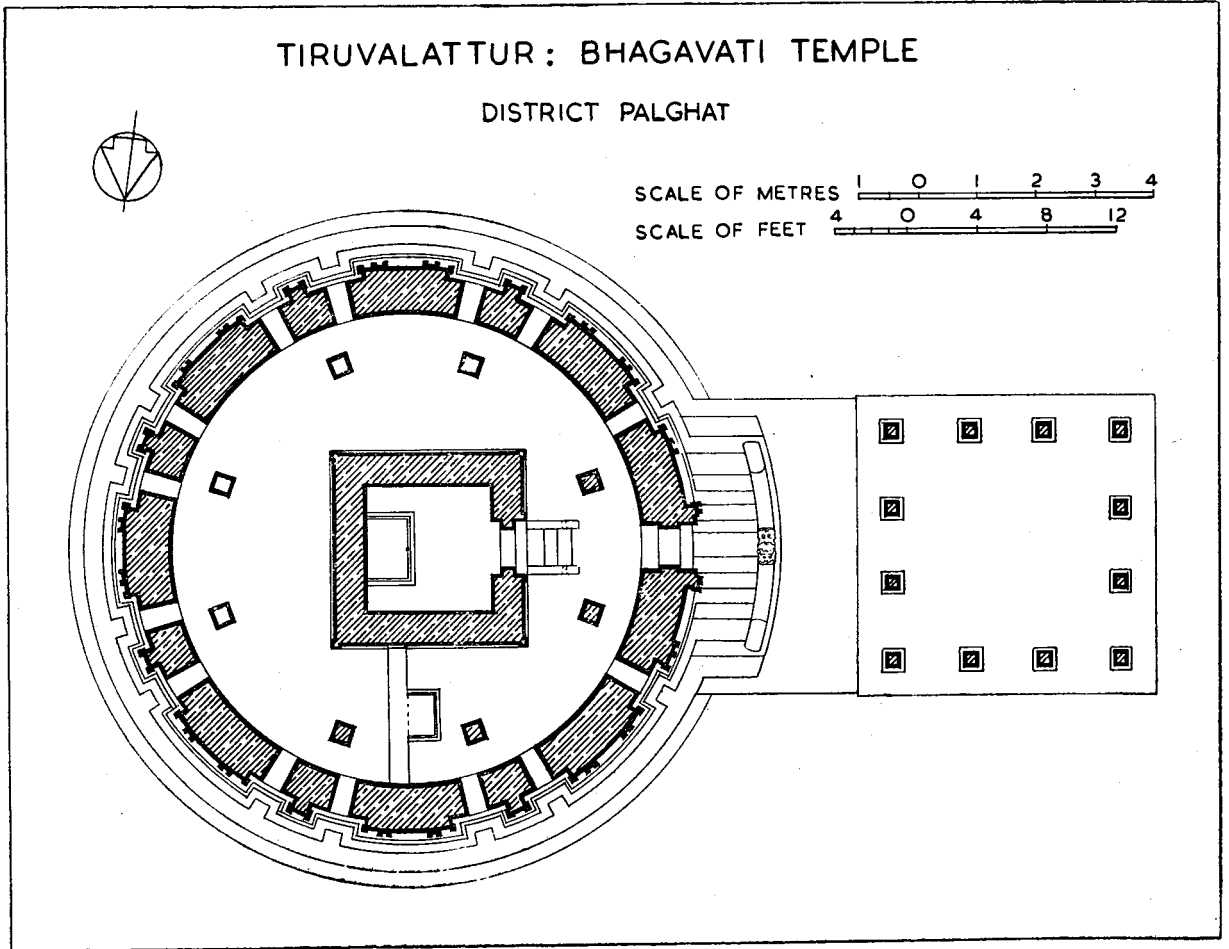


FIG. 65

simha-mālā of the *adhishṭhāna*. Perhaps the *praṇāla* and associated *bhūta* figure are remnants of the earlier temple at the place. Compared to the *adhishṭhāna*, the shrine has a simple *bhitti* relieved with *ghana-dvāras*, and *kuḍya-stambhas*. The curved *kapōta* of the *prastara* is decorated with *kūḍus*, while the *valabhī* is adorned with *bhūta-mālā*.

Both the timber roofs are covered with copper plates and have bevelled edges. Atop the first roof rises the circular wooden *grīvā* or the second storey. On each direction of the *grīvā* is to be seen a seated four-armed figure of a *Dēvī*. The upper roof is conical and crowned by a *stūpī*.

The entrance into the temple is from the west through lateral flights of steps screened by a sculptured banister. In the centre of the *phalaka* merges the two *vyāla*-heads seated at opposite direction and it was these heads which issue out the *hasti-hastas*, spread in a gentle curve. A representation of a *tōraṇa*, flanked on either side by a standing figure, is the sole decorative element of the granite *phalaka*. Two *dvāra-pālikās*, on either side of the shrine-door, are made of stone though they are copies of the wooden tradition.

The interior of the shrine reveals several interesting features. A circular inner wall runs inside the circular shrine, imparting the *sāndhāra* character to the temple. But the *madhya-nāḍī* between the *bāhya-bhitti* and the *āntara-bhitti* might have been used as a passage for circumambulation though it is now blocked towards the northern side. Still more interesting is the presence of a four-sided miniature *vimāna* in the inner circle. It has its own flight of steps, the *adhishṭhāna* and *śikhara*. The *adhishṭhāna*, built of granite, consists of *upāna*, *jagatī*, *vṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *paṭṭikā* and *prati*. Encircled by a row of eight columns, the *garbha-griha* has an octagonal *grīvā* and *śikhara*. Each side of the *śikhara* contains a *nāsikā*. However, the *bhitti* is devoid of any embellishment.

4. APSIDAL SHRINE

A. GENERAL

Kerala has no apsidal temple built in pure Drāviḍa style. Invariably its *gaja-prishṭhākāra* roof is made of timber though covered with copper sheets. It is easier to have such a roof in wood than in brick-and-mortar, and much less in stone. Some apsidal shrines must have sprung up in this phase as well, but the absence of any definite feature makes it difficult to date them precisely. The apsidal sub-shrine for the Śāstā in the Vaḍakkunnātha and other temple-complexes emerged in this phase. But the worship of Śāstā is still a living cult, as is evident from the popularity of the Sabari-malai temple.

In the Late phase, however, the popularity of Śāstā suffered a little, for he did not enjoy the same exalted position as that of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Bhagavatī. That was the reason for his occupying an inconspicuous corner of a larger temple-complex. Naturally, the association of apsidal shrine with Śāstā in central and southern Kerala may also tend to show the loss of popularity that this architectural form suffered in the Late phase. Yet, in northern Kerala it continued to be as important or sacred as the square one. In this part, the principal shrine followed the apsidal outline, and it may be recalled that the Mahāliṅgēśvara temple at Aduru, District Cannanore, is one of the biggest apsidal temples in the west coast. Even the Subrahmaṇya temple at Payyannur is a big complex raised on apsidal plan; it is proposed to begin our description with this temple as it has definite features peculiar to this phase.

As there is no apsidal shrine that may be classified as the Drāviḍa shrine we begin our description with examples belonging to the Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style.

B. DRĀVIDA-KĒRALA

(i) DESCRIPTION

Payyannur: Subrahmanya temple

(Pls. LXII C and LXIII A; fig. 66)

The Subrahmanya temple at Payyannur, in Taliparamba Taluk, District Cannanore, is a *dvitala* apsidal-*vimāna* with *gaja-prishthākāra* roof. Facing the east, the temple, but for the *sōpānas*, door-frame and *praṇāla*, is built of laterite and wood. The structural complex has a number of subsidiary structures, all of them being surrounded by a *prākāra*. To the north-east of the main unit stands a small shrine dedicated to Lakshmi. All the roofs, including that of *vaḷiambalam*, are covered with copper sheets. There is a small shrine inside the *vaḷiambalam* on the back wall of which has been painted the bearded figure of Paraśurāma. In front of the main shrine is placed the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, also with a pyramidal

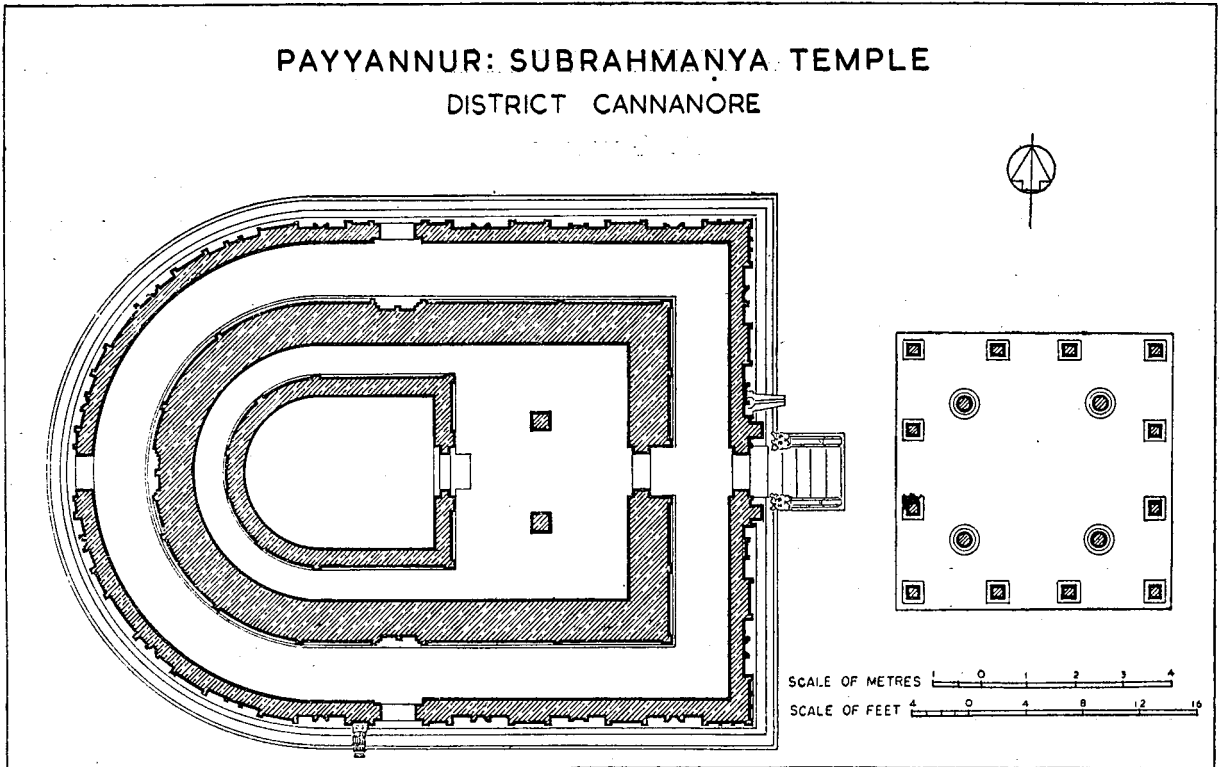


FIG. 66

roof protected by copper-sheets. Both the roofs of the Subrahmanya shrine are *gaja-prishthākāra* in form; needless to say, the *grīvā* also follows the same outline. Surrounded by bracket figures, the *grīvā* contains four *grīvā-kōshthas* enshrining seated images in wood.

The *adhishṭhāna* of the principal shrine consists of *upāna*, a short *jagatī*, flattish *ṛittakumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with dentils and *paṭṭikā*. Above the *adhishṭhāna*, rises the *vēdikā* with only *pādas*. While the doors start from above the *paṭṭikā*, niches with *śālā-śikharas*, *jālī*-windows with *makara-tōraṇas*, and *kuḍya-stambhas* with *pushpa-pōtikas* stand practically on the *vēdī*. All the four doors are functional, but the *garbha-griha*, also apsidal on plan, has only one door, besides three *ghana-dvāras*. There are, again, two *pradakṣhiṇā-pathas* around the *garbha-griha*. Curiously enough, it has two *praṇālas*: the one to the north is connected with the *garbha-griha*, and it emanates from the *kaṇṭha* part of the *adhishṭhāna*, whereas the other, on the east, comes out by the side of the main *sāpāna*. Associated with the main *praṇāla* is a standing figure of a dwarf holding *gadā* and *śaṅkha*. A three-hooded cobra is shown over his head, which is rather uncommon, as the general practice is to depict the *bhūta* figure without any protective cover over the head. It has a *bhūta-valabhī* and a prominently-projected cornice.

It is then evident that the apsidal Subrahmanya temple at Payyannur is not only a *sāndhāra-vimāna* but also a *sarvatōbhadrā* type of shrine. In front of the *garbha-griha*, which looks like a semi-circular structure is the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, built on two columns. To some extent, the plan of the *garbha-griha* recalls that of the Durgā temple at Aihole. That it is a sculpturally-rich temple-complex is evident from the array of beautifully-carved bracket figures, in wood, showing various figural motifs, including divinities. The *dvāra-pālas* of the temple are also of wood.

No inscription is recovered from the temple but on stylistic considerations, the temple may be dated to the seventeenth century.

Mangalapadi: Sadāśiva temple

(Figs. 11 and 67)

Mangalapadi, in Kasaragod Taluk, of District Cannanore, was an important religious centre, as the ruins of many structural complexes are to be seen scattered throughout the village. To the west, is the Durgā temple, while the apsidal Sadāśiva temple is situated on the eastern outskirt of the village. Towards the north is another Śaiva temple known as the Sōmanātha temple. All the temples are made of laterite blocks like the majority of the temples in the District of Cannanore.

The area appears to have been under the political control of the Kolattiris during the visit of Marco Polo towards the end of the thirteenth century. They were the descendants of the Mūshika kings who ruled during the tenth to the twelfth centuries. Although there is no temple-inscription mentioning the contribution of the Kolattiris—the Colaṣṭri of the European accounts—one may assume reasonably that this line of rulers, too, was responsible for building temples and shrines. In the light of this political background, we may ascribe to the Kolattiris the authorship of the ruined Sadāśiva temple, built on an apsidal plan.

The Sadāśiva temple faces the north-east and is fronted by a *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*; no trace of *nāḷambalam* is now extant. At present the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa* is represented only

by its laterite base. Also, there is a well to the north-eastern corner of the monument. The superstructure has given way, and although a square shrine has grown above the old ruins in recent times, it is almost covered with vegetation.

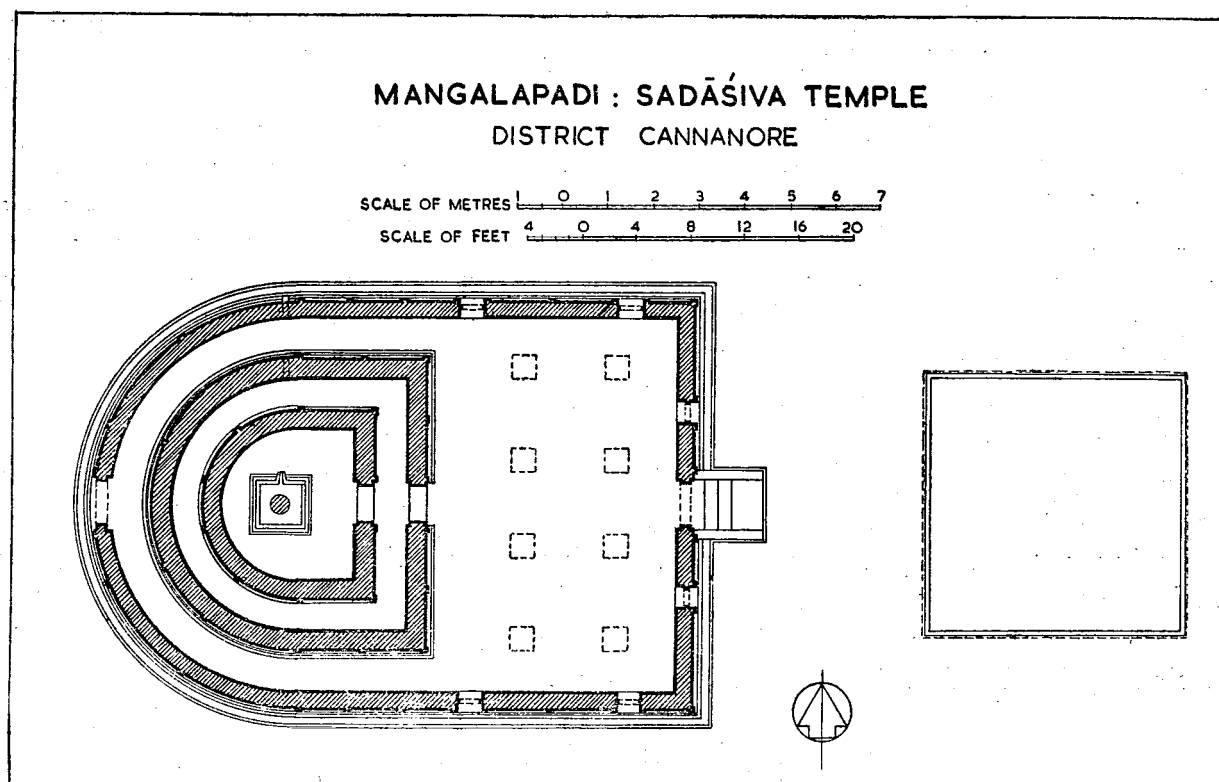


FIG. 67

The temple is not only of the *sāndhāra* type but also a *sarvatōbhadrā* shrine having four openings on all the four sides. Indeed the temple has two *sāndhāra* passages—one around the *garbha-griha* proper and the other all round the second apsidal wall. Axially, the temple consists of a *garbha-griha*, and a pillared *mukha-maṇḍapa*, both the units being enclosed by the outermost apsidal wall. The space in front between the first and the second walls may have served as the *antarāla*. There are eight pillars in the *mukha-maṇḍapa*; and these are arranged in two horizontal rows dividing the *mukha-maṇḍapa* into five bays. Unfortunately, no intact pillar is now available. The entrance into the *mukha-maṇḍapa* is through a flight of steps, built of laterite slabs; it is not associated with any banister.

The *adhishṭhāna* of the *bāhya-bhitti* consists of *upāna*, now buried under the ground, *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. As the entire *adhishṭhāna* is made of laterite blocks, the decorations in the *kaṇṭha* are not very clear. Nevertheless, the *ṛitta-kumuda* has as much projection as the *upāna*. The *adhishṭhāna* is followed by *vēdī*. Made out of granite, the *prāṇāla*, in the form of a channelled stone, comes over the *ṛitta-kumuda*. There are at least seven openings on the walls, meant for doors and *jālakas*. On the apse part, corresponding to the

main entrance, is to be seen an opening equal to the width of the main entrance. Two such openings lie on the side walls as well. All these openings seem to have been overtopped by *tōraṇas*, and the wall was relieved originally by tetragonal *kuḍya-stambhas*.

It is difficult to date this ruined temple on the basis of available evidence. Comparing its features with the Subrahmaṇya temple at Payyannur, the temple may perhaps be dated to about the sixteenth century.

Aduru: Mahāliṅgēśvara temple

(Pl. LXIII C; fig. 68)

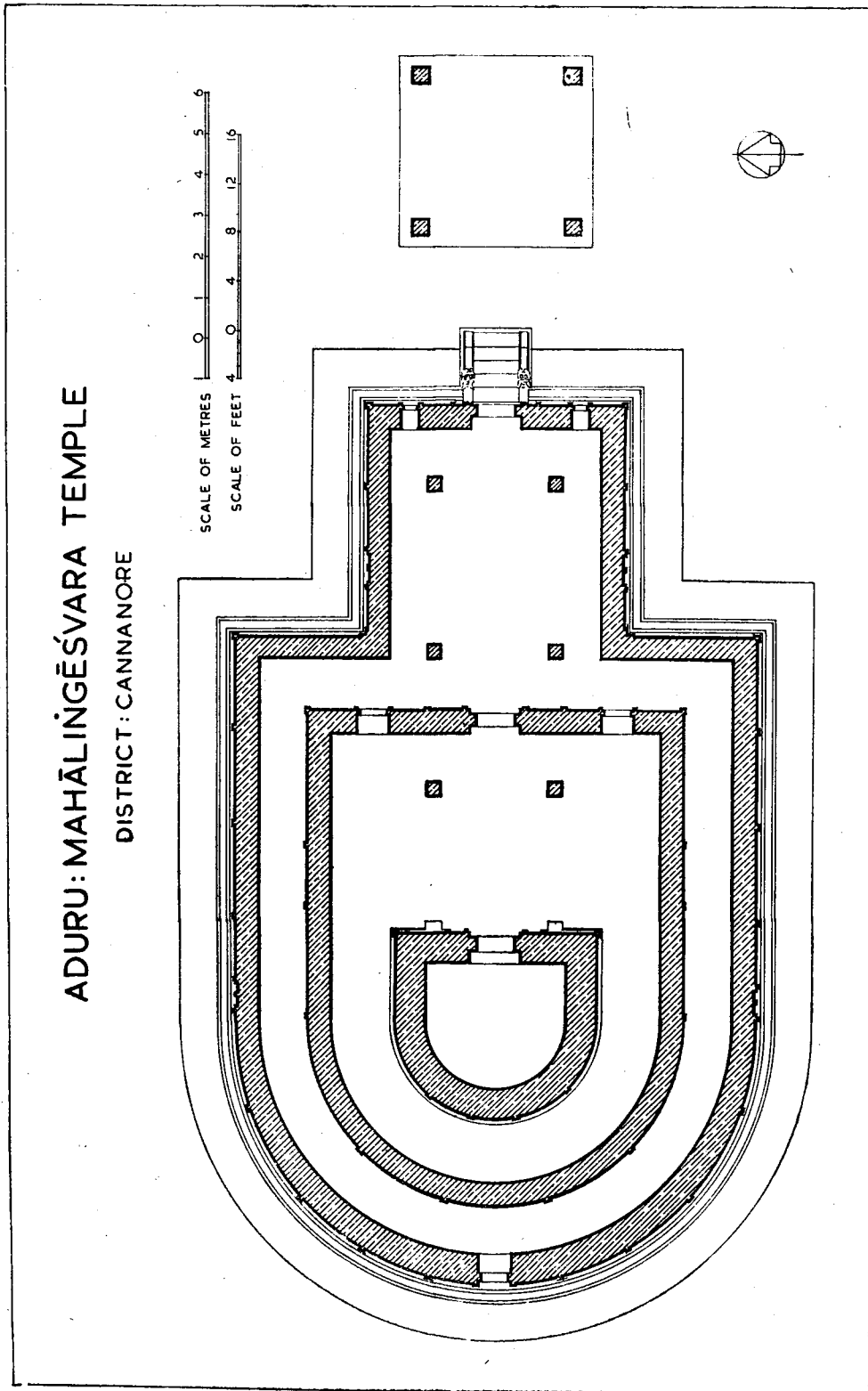
As already stated, the Mahāliṅgēśvara temple at Aduru, in Kasaragod Taluk, of District Cannanore, is one of the biggest apsidal temples of Kerala. The name Mahāliṅgēśvara is, however, common more in Tuḷunāḍu than in Kerala. In fact, the last wave of apsidal shrines too spread possibly from Tuḷunāḍu. There exists some confusion about the location of this Aduru, which is often taken wrongly as Aduru in District Dharwar of Karnataka. The latter place yielded the inscription of the Chālukyan king Kīrttivarman II (745-755), while one of the inscriptions known from the present site is dated to Kollam 1063 (A.D. 1888).¹ It is a Malayalam inscription engraved on the door-jamb of the main entrance and records gift of the some component by one Pārvaṭi Kōṭṭalamma, wife of the *yuvarāja* of Māyappāḍi. Into the floor of the Gaṇēśa shrine in the same temple-complex has been fixed an inscribed stone-slab, the inscription of which states that the *mātrikā-bali-śīle* and the images of Vināyaka and Viṣṇumūrti were the gift of Guṇyapparaśa of Kumbule.

The Mahāliṅgēśvara temple is a *tritāla* apsidal-*vimāna*, facing the east; two of the three roofs, *gaja-prishṭhākāra* in shape, are covered with copper sheets. The uppermost one is crowned by four *stūpīs*, and the *grīvā* below it shows the use of reverse brackets. Under this *grīvā* runs the second roof which extends even over the *mukha-maṇḍapa*; the latter roof simulates the *śuka-nāsa* of the Chālukyan tradition. The roof above the *āditala* is made of tiles and it extends over the *mukha-maṇḍapa* also. Thus, the *mukha-maṇḍapa* is two-storeyed, while the sanctum proper has a three-storeyed superstructure.

Like the temples of Tuḷunāḍu, a screen-wall raised on a granite base surrounds both the sanctum and narrower *mukha-maṇḍapa*. As a matter of fact, the lowest roof covers the last *pradakṣhiṇā-patha* that passes between the screen-wall and the outer sanctum-wall. This enclosure is rectangular on plan.

The Mahāliṅgēśvara temple at Aduru is not merely a *sāndhāra*-temple but also a *sarvatōbhadrā-vimāna*. Its axial division shows certain features, not commonly met with in the temples of Kerala; in some respects its layout is not only concentric but also linear. So far as the former aspect is concerned, it is a temple with three concentric apsidal walls,

¹ *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy 1935-36*, nos. 109-110.



the innermost one serving as the *garbha-griha* with its own superstructure. The arrangement gives rise to two *pradakṣhiṇā-paṭhas*, which are distinct from the one formed by the screen-wall and the *bāhya-bhitti*. In linear arrangement the apsidal *garbha-griha* has an *antarāla* with two columns in front; the *antarāla* is formed by the larger space, left in front of the *garbha-griha*, due to the construction of the intermediary wall between the innermost and the outermost walls. Similar arrangement has been followed while raising the outermost apsidal outline. The space in front of the second apsidal enclosure may be called *mahā-maṇḍapa*, standing on four columns. Now, the narrower part projecting out of the apsidal outline may serve as the *mukha-maṇḍapa*, which is bereft of any pillar. It has to be approached by a flight of five steps, with *hasti-hasta* banisters. In front of the temple stands the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, with a pyramidal roof.

The outermost shrine-wall stands on an *adhishṭhāna*, the mouldings of which consist of *upāna*, tall *jagatī*, *ṛitta-kumuda*, *kaṇṭha*, *kampa*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*; it is followed by *vēdī*, above which rises the wall or the *bhitti*.

The Gaṇapati temple, built on a square plan, is completely remodelled. It is also fronted by a pyramidal *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*.

5. ELLIPTICAL SHRINE

A. GENERAL

It is an uncommon ground-plan, though prescribed by all the *Vāstu-sāstras*. Mention has already been made (p. 274) about the existence of ground-plan simulating a *kukkuṭ-āṇḍa*. The only definite example of such elliptical plan is the Śiva temple at Vaikam, apart from the one seen in the Mahādēva temple-complex at Chengannur, District Alleppey (above, p. 73).

B. DRĀVIDA-KĒRAḶA

(i) DESCRIPTION

Vaikam: Śiva temple

(Pls. LIX A and LXIII B; fig. 69)

The Śiva temple at Vaikam, in Vaikam Taluk of District Kottayam, is the venue of the famous Vaikam *satyagraha* (1924-25) which ultimately led to the opening of the temple's approach roads to all Hindus irrespective of caste or creed. It is a large temple-complex, the elliptical principal shrine serving as the pivot, centring which runs all other concentric arrangement. It is an impressive structure with its huge bevel-edged conical roof, plated with copper. All its important subsidiary structures, including the *nālambalam* and the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, have copper roofs spread over a timber-built base. However, *gōpura*

has the tiled roof standing on recently-built columns. Also, there is a hypaethral Bhagavati shrine outside the *nāmbalam*. The *balikkal-maṇḍapa* of the temple is highly ornate with carved pillars and various decorative elements derived from the Nāyaka tradition.

The oval shrine stands on a granite *adhishṭhāna* consisting of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* with *kampas*, *valabhī* and *kapōta*. Here the last-mentioned moulding seems to be the combination of *paṭṭikā* and *kapōta*. Above the *adhishṭhāna* has been built the *vēdikā*

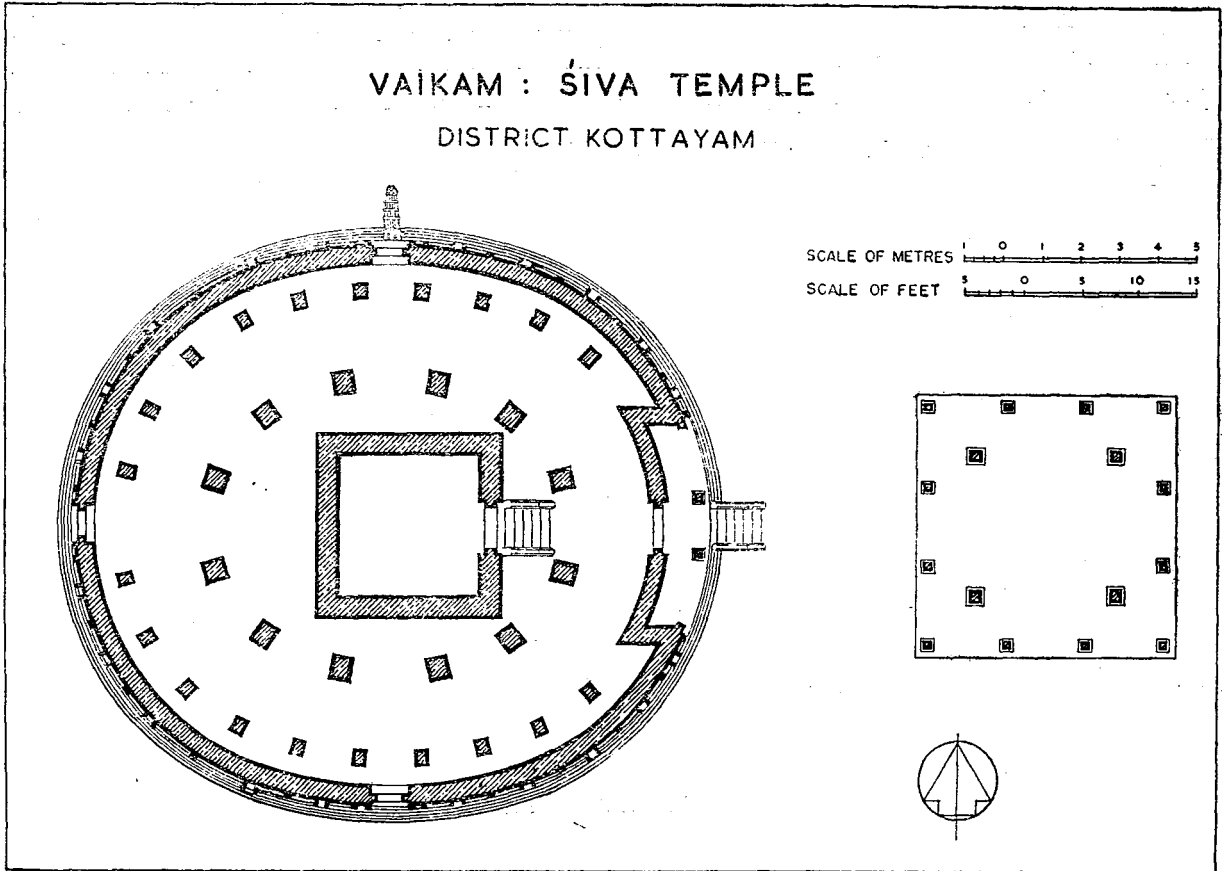


FIG. 69

whose uppermost moulding is similar to that of *prati*. Interestingly, *pādas* are absent both in the *kaṇṭha* as well as in the *vēdī*. Rising above the *vēdikā* is the *bhitti*, made of laterite blocks, but bears the murals throughout. At the same time, the wall is relieved with four doors, niches, with *pañjaras* on top, and *kuḍya-stambhas*. All the *kuḍya-stambhas*, each of them associated with a wooden bracket figure, rise from above the *prati* of the *vēdikā*, whereas the *kōshṭhas* stand practically on the *adhishṭhāna*. Most of the *kōshṭhas* enclose *jālakas* in wood. The presence of the four doors makes it a *sarvatōbhadrā* shrine, which has also a capacious *sāndhāra*-circuit. Piercing through the *kapōta* issues out the *praṇāla* held in *simha-mukha*. It is a fluted shaft, with at least three ornamental *paṭṭis*. In consonance with the general practice, a standing dwarf, holding a mace in one of the hands, carries the *nāla*

on the head—one of its hands also holding the *praṇāla* as an additional support. But the *bhūta* figure has a grotesque face with fearful eyes and teeth protruding out.

The main entrance into the shrine proper on the east is through a flight of steps flanked by banisters, the latter bearing the carving of standing deities. These banisters are also in the shape of *hasti-hasta*. Like the Śiva temple at Ettumanur or the Subrahmaṇya temple at Udayanapuram, the latter near Vaikam, the temple here has also a portico-like frontage brought about by discontinuing the *bāhya-bhitti* on either side of the entrance. There are two columns here. In the centre of the oval shrine stands the square *garbha-griha*, evidently in the shape of a miniature Drāviḍa-shrine. It has its own *sōpāna* flanked by carved *phalakas* as banisters. Two rows of columns, mostly of wood, run around the *garbha-griha*—the inner row having twelve and the outer row twenty pillars.

The temple is fronted by a detached *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, carrying a pyramidal roof. As usual, its *adhishṭhāna* is built of granite, and the mouldings consist of *upāna*, *jagatī*, octagonal *kumuda*, *kaṇṭha* and *paṭṭikā*. The *kaṇṭha* here displays a row of dentils, an unusual decoration of the *adhishṭhāna* of the *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*.

The temple in the present state cannot be dated before the sixteenth century.

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GLOSSARY OF INDIAN ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

- adhishṭhāna*: base (excluding the *upapīṭha*) of a temple, pillared hall or similar structure. It consists of moulded tiers, each tier having its distinct name like *upāna*, (the lowest moulding), *jagati*, *kumuda*, *kañṭha*, *paṭṭikā* and so on. There are different types of *adhishṭhāna*, each having a distinctive name.
- āditala*: ground floor of a storeyed temple or *vimāna*.
- ādihō-padma*: a decorative pattern, similar to drooping lotus-petals, of one of the mouldings of *adhishṭhāna* or of *valabhi*, the latter being a moulding below the cornice or *kapōta*. It may occur also as a decorative element of the *upapīṭha*, an optional member below the *adhishṭhāna*.
- āliṅga*: a moulding above the cornice or *kapōta*. It is represented generally by a blocking course. *Āliṅga* is a member of the *prastara* or entablature.
- alpa-vimāna*: small one-storeyed temple or *vimāna*.
- ambalam*: means a temple in common Malayalam usage.
- ambu-mārga*: water course for letting out *abhishēka* or lustral water from *sanctum-sanctorum*.
- aṅgas*: different 'limbs' or parts of a temple, each with a distinctive name. Generally a temple has six parts like (from bottom upwards) *adhishṭhāna*, *bhitti*, *prastara*, *grīvā*, *sikhara* and *stūpi*. Temples with six parts are called *shadaṅga vimāna*.
- āntara-bhitti*: inner wall, specially of a *sāndhāra vimāna*, i.e., a temple with ambulatory.
- antarāla*: passage or a hall between the sanctum and the *maṇḍapa* or hall immediately preceding it. By and large, it occupies the same place as the *ardha-maṇḍapa*.
- antari*: a recessed moulding of the *prastara* or entablature; it occurs also in certain types of *adhishṭhāna*.
- archanā-maṇḍapa*: otherwise known as *namaskāra-maṇḍapa*, a detached pillared hall in front of the Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style of temple.
- ardha-maṇḍapa*: hall immediately preceding the *garbha-griha* or sanctum; see also *antarāla*.
- ashṭāsra*: eight-sided; generally used to describe the octagonal *sikhara*.
- bāhya-bhitti*: outer wall.
- balikkal-maṇḍapa*: the pillared hall raised above the principal *balipīṭha*, in front of the main entrance into the temple.
- balipīṭha*: a stone pedestal or platform on which oblation is placed. In the temples of Kerala, there occur several small *balipīṭhas*, apart from the principal one, of larger size, in front of the main entrance.
- bhadra*: central projection of the wall; it is distinct from the corner projections or *kaṇṭhas*.
- bhitti*: wall.
- bhūta-mālā*: row of dwarf figures shown in relief on the *valabhi*, a moulding below the cornice or *kapōta* of the *prastara* or entablature.
- brahma-kānta*: a type of pillar or pilaster of tetragonal variety.
- chaturmukha*: in popular parlance, a temple with four openings. Such temples with four openings have been described in the *Vāstu-sāstra* as *sarvatōbhadra* temples. The term *chaturmukha* is generally used to denote a Jaina Basti of this type.
- chaturāṅga-vimāna*: a *vimāna* or temple with four *aṅgas* or parts, viz., *adhishṭhāna*, *bhitti*, *sikhara* and *stūpi*.
- dāru-garbha*: wooden armature in clay or stucco-images.
- dēv-kōshṭha*: niche enshrining a deity on the shrine-wall. Sometimes it is without any image.
- dīpa-māḍam*: lamp-pavilion.
- dīpa-lakṣmī*: an art-motif representing a lady holding a lamp.
- dīpa-stambha*: pillar for lamp or lamps.
- dhvaja-stambha*: flagstaff.
- dvāra-mukha-sōpāna*: flight of steps in front of the main entrance.
- dvāra-pāla*: male door-keeper.

dvāra-pālikā: female door-keeper.

dvitāla-vimāna: two-storeyed temple.

ekabhūmi-vimāna: one-storeyed temple.

gajapriśṭha: roof or *sikhara* in the shape of elephant's back. This type of roof is common for the apsidal shrine.

gaja-vyāla: a motif depicting combination of elephant and a leonine figure.

gala, *grivā*: neck; an architectural member similar to clerestory below the *sikhara* or roof. *Gala* is also a kind of recessed moulding of the *adhishṭhāna*.

gala-pādas: rail pattern of the *gala* or *kaṇṭha* of an *adhishṭhāna*; often they constitute the base of pilasters.

garbha-griha: shrine proper; *sanctum sanctorum*.

ghana-dvāras: false-door.

ghaṭa-prāsāda: a kind of circular temple perhaps simulating a *ghaṭa* or pitcher.

gō-mukha: terminal end of *praṇāla* or gargoyle in the shape of cow's mouth.

gōpura: a gateway with tower above for a temple, palace or city.

grivā: same as *gala*.

grivā-kōshṭhas: niches on the *grivā* or the clerestory raising the *sikhara*; they enshrine deities.

haṁsa-mālā: a decorative element in the form of row of ducks on the *valabhi*.

hāra: 'garland'. A row of miniature shrines or shrine-representations over each terrace occupying the position of a parapet. The miniature shrines consist of *kūṭas* (shrine of square or circular plan), *śālās* (shrine of oblong plan), and *pañjaras* (shrine of apsidal plan).

hārāntara: intervening spaces, often recessed, between the *kūṭas*, *śālās* and *pañjaras*. These recesses descend down even in walls of the sanctum.

hārāntara-kōshṭha: niche in the *hārāntara* recesses of the wall, generally in the space between the *bhadra* and the *karṇa* projections.

hasti-hasta: banister in the shape of elephant's trunk on either side of a flight of steps.

ishṭaka-garbha: clay or stucco image with brick armature.

jagati: the vertical moulding, above the *upāna*, of the *adhishṭhāna*.

jāla, *jāli* or *jālaka*: perforated or honeycombed pattern of windows and false niches.

jālaka-pañjara: niche with perforated pattern and overtopped with representation of barrel-vaulted *sikhara* characteristic of *pañjara*, a shrine of apsidal plan.

jalāyana: passage for letting out lustral water from the sanctum.

jīrnōddhāra: renovation of temple or other structure.

kalaśa: a vase-shaped finial over the *āmalaka* of the northern temple. Also, the lowermost member of the capital of a column. The ceremony of consecration of temple is also known as *kalaśa-sthāpana*.

kampas: a fillet-like minor moulding separating major mouldings of *adhishṭhāna*.

kaṇṭha: a recessed moulding of *adhishṭhāna*. See *gala*.

kapōta: 'pigeon'. Overhanging cornice, generally flexed. It is the most important moulding of the *prastara* or entablature. There are certain *adhishṭhāna* types whose crowning member is also *kapōta*. The *kapōta-bandha adhishṭhāna* has *kapōta* as the crowning member.

karṇas: projected corner division of the wall on either side of the central *bhadra* projection.

kaṭṭu: a Tamil term denoting octagonal or polygonal part between the square bottom and top of a column.

kiṭi-vāsal: 'parrot-beak'. Malayalam term for *nāsikā* or *kuḍu*.

kūḍus: Tamil term for *nāsikās* that decorate the *kapōta*. Literally it means 'nest'. It is a horseshoe-shaped motif carved on the cornice. In appearance, it is very much like the *chaitya*-window pattern of the Buddhist tradition.

kuḍya-stambha: pilaster shown in relief on wall-surface. It may be tetragonal or *brahma-kānta*, octagonal or *vishṇu-kānta*, sixteen-sided or *indra-kānta* and circular or *rudra-kānta*.

kumbha: a flat and bulbous member of the capital crowning a pillar. It intervenes between the *kalaśa* and *tāḍi*.

kumuda: most important moulding of *adhishṭhāna*. Generally speaking, it is the occurrence of this moulding that differentiates a temple from other secular structures. *Kumuda* may be octagonal, circular or *vṛitta*, *tripaṭṭa* (triple-faced), fluted or *suṇḍōbhēda* and so on. Generally, it overlies the vertical *jagati*.

- kūttambalam*: a Malayalam term for an edifice within a temple-complex where dance, music and other recitals take place.
- lalāṭa-bimba*: a decorative motif, mostly represented by a deity, in the centre of the door-lintel.
- liṅga*: aniconic form of Śiva in the shape of a phallus. It is fixed into a pedestal called *liṅga-piṭha*.
- lupā*: rafters used for making the ceiling.
- māḍakkōvil*: Tamil word denoting a storeyed shrine or mansion raised on a platform or high terrace.
- mahā-maṇḍapa*: a hall, open or closed, in front of the *ardha-maṇḍapa* or *antarāla*.
- makara-tōraṇa*: festoon or *tōraṇa* is a decorative garland or scroll, either straight or arched, spanning the tops of two columns. Over the capitals of the columns are placed the *makara*-heads and the ornamental festoon issues out of their mouths forming generally an arched entrance.
- mālā-sthāna*: apex of pillar or pilaster below the capital with garlands hanging down.
- mañchaka*: simple *adhishṭhāna* without any *kumuda* moulding. Generally meant for secular edifices.
- maṇḍapa*: pillared hall, either open or closed.
- mayūra-tōraṇa*: differs from *makara-tōraṇa* in having the representation of peacock or *mayūra* instead of *makara*.
- mukha-maṇḍapa*: pillared hall at the entrance of the temple. It may be the only hall in axial alignment to the shrine or the first in the series in front of the temple.
- nāla*: water-chute.
- nālambalam*: a Malayalam term for the cloister around the main shrine or shrines. Also called *chuttambalam*, which means literally a cloister around the ambulatory.
- nālukattu*: house with four wings arranged around a central courtyard.
- namaskāra-maṇḍapa*: a detached pillared hall, with pyramidal roof, in front of the shrine.
- nāsikā*: 'nose'; projected arched opening. Same as *kaṇḍu* or *kiṭivāsala*. *Nāsās* or *nāsikās* decorate not only the *kapōta* or cornice but also the *śikhara*.
- nirandhāra*: temple without an inner ambulatory.
- pāda*: pillar or pilaster.
- pāda-bandha*: a type of *adhishṭhāna*.
- padma*: lotus; a decorative element of *adhishṭhāna*, *upapiṭha* and also of *valabhi*. A moulding of the *adhishṭhāna* also bears the same name. The capital-member or dousene below the abacus or *phalaka* is also called *padma* and it is more or less shaped like a lotus with petals.
- padma-bandha*: a fillet separating the pillar-shaft from the capital. It is a decorative band between the rows of lotus-petals.
- padma-prāsāda*: a type of circular temple as described in the *Vāstu-sāstra*.
- padma-pādukā*: an optional member below the *adhishṭhāna* in the form of *cyma recta*.
- padma-piṭha*: lotus-pedestal.
- padma-valabhi*: *valabhi* decorated with lotus motifs.
- pañchna-prākāra*: five successive enclosures. According to the local tradition the five *prākāras* are *katte*, *balivaṭṭam*, *cuttambalam* or *nālambalam*, *viḷakkumāḍham*, *śivelippura* or the processional path around the sanctum and *puramatil*.
- pañjara*: miniature apsidal shrine. Literally it means nest. Often the term is used as a compound in association with other terms like *nāsikā*, *kapōta*, *jāla* and so on to convey an idea of composite ornamentation specially for the wall. For example, *jāla-pañjara* denotes *pañjara*-motif accompanied by a perforated screen motif. *Pañjaras* used as wall-decoration may be in the shape of *nāsikā*, *kapōta* and so on.
- paṭṭikā*: a major *adhishṭhāna* moulding of considerable thickness. Sometimes it is employed as the crowning member.
- phalaka*: abacus of pillar-capital. Also used in the wider sense of stone slab.
- piṭha*: pedestal or platform.
- pōtikā*: corbel-bracket of columns.
- pradakṣiṇā-patha*: circumambulatory path.
- prākāra*: enclosure wall.

- prastara* : entablature over the wall or pillars. Its mouldings consist of *uttara* (beam), *vājana*, *valabhi*, *kapōta*, *ālīnga* and *antari*. All these individual mouldings are employed in *adhishṭhāna*s also.
- prati* : crowning moulding of *adhishṭhāna*, generally coming above *paṭṭikā* or *kapōta*, as the case may be.
- prati-bandha* : a type of *adhishṭhāna* which is generally crowned by *prati*.
- ratha* : chariot; in northern tradition it is graduated projections of temples. To certain extent it may be equated with the *bhadra*-projection of the southern *vimāna*s.
- śaduram* : Tamil term denoting square-sectioned part of the pillar.
- śālā* : shrine of oblong (*āyatāśra*) plan with barrel-vaulted roof pinnaced by a series of *stūpīs*.
- śālā-sikhara* : *sikhara* characteristic of *śālās*; it is wagon-topped or barrel-vaulted.
- sama-chaturaśra-vimāna* : temple which is square from base to top.
- samudga* or *samudra* : a type of circular temple.
- sāndhāra* : temple with ambulatory inside.
- sarvatōbbhadra* : temple with four openings on cardinal directions.
- sikhara* : roof above the *grīvā* of the *vimāna*. It may be square, circular, octagonal, apsidal or even elliptical in form.
- simha-mālā* : garland or row of lions used as the decorative element of the *kanṭha* of the *adhishṭhāna* or above the *prastara*.
- simha-mukha* : 'lion's mouth' which holds the *praṇāla*. Some texts describe it as *makara*'s mouth.
- sōpāna* : flight of steps.
- śrī-bandha* : a type of *adhishṭhāna*.
- śrī-kōvil* : principal shrine.
- stambha* : pillar. Also see *pāda*.
- sthapati* : architect.
- stūpi*, *stūpikā* : finial forming the topmost part of a *vimāna* or *gōpura*.
- śuka-nāsā* or *śuka-nāsikā* : 'parrot's nose or beak'. An integrated projection from the *vimāna* over the *maṇḍapa*, in front of the sanctum, specially in the Chālukya tradition.
- śuṇḍu* : 'trunk of elephant'. Architecturally, the fluted design of the *praṇāla*.
- śūru-maṇḍapa* : hall enclosing the front part of the Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style of temple, specially in south Kerala.
- śuttu-nāḍi* : Malayalam term for circumambulatory.
- tala* : storey either of temple or gateway (*gōpura*).
- taraṅga-pōtikā* : a kind of roll or *taraṅga* moulding of corbel-bracket.
- teppakuḷam* : temple-tank where floating festival of a deity takes place.
- triṇṇāṭṭa-kumuda* : tri-faceted *kumuda* moulding of *adhishṭhāna*.
- upāna* : also called *pādukā*, the lowermost moulding of the *adhishṭhāna*.
- upapīṭha* : sub-base; an additional member below the *adhishṭhāna*, with moulding often similar to those of the *adhishṭhāna*.
- ūrdhva-padma* : a decorative element showing upward arrangement of lotus petals.
- uttara* : principal beam, the lowermost moulding of the *prastara*.
- vājana* : a moulding of the *adhishṭhāna* as well as of the *prastara*. In *adhishṭhāna* it often replaces the *paṭṭikā*; perhaps it is thinner and less projected than the *paṭṭikā*. As a moulding of the *prastara* it occupies the place immediately above the *uttara*.
- valabhi* : a moulding of the *prastara* placed between the *vājana* and the *kapōta*. Generally convex in profile, it is decorated variously with the row of *bhūtas*, *haṁsas*, *padmas* and sometimes with a dentil-course representing the joist-ends.
- vaḷiambalam* : a Malayalam term whose Sanskrit equivalent is *sabhā*. The front part of the *nālambalam* is called *vaḷiambalam*.
- vāstu-śāstra* : science of architecture.
- vēdikā* or *vēdi* : railing, a member that generally intervenes the *adhishṭhāna* and the *bhitti* proper.
- viḷakkumāḍam* : a Malayalam term meaning literally lamp-house. It is a structure next to *nālambalam* and is generally fixed with rows of lamps.

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

- vimāna*: an entire temple from *adhishthāna* to *stūpi*; the term is used generally to denote south Indian temples .
- vimāna-kōshthā*: niche on temple-walls as opposed to niche on the *grivā*.
- vira-kaṇṭha*: a connecting rod between the shaft of the column and the overlying capital components like *kalaśa*, *tāḍi*, *kumbha*, *padma* or *pāli* and *phalaka*.
- vishṇu-kānta*: octagonal pillar or pilaster.
- vriṣha*: a kind of circular temple.
- vṛitta*: circular; also a type of circular shrine.
- vṛitta-kumuda*: circular *kumuda* moulding of the *adhishthāna*.
- vṛitta-sphuṭita*: precursor of so-called *kumbha-pañjara* (*pañjara* coming out of the *kumbha*) motif used as wall-ornamentation. It is a pillar coming out of the *vṛitta* and adorned with a *nāsikā* on top.
- vṛttāyata*: *vimāna* of elliptical plan.
- vyāla-mālā*: a frieze of *vyālas* (leonine *ihāmṛiga*) used as the decorative element of the *kaṇṭha* of the *adhishthāna* or on the top of the *prastara*. The motif is described also as *simha-mālā*.

INDEX

A

- 'Abd-al-Malik, 22
abhaya-mudrā, 238
abhiskēka water, 91, 248, 273
 Achyuta Rāya, 39, 232n
 Ādhipurīśvara temple, 62, 167
adhishṭhāna, 15, 18, 53, 56, 58, 62-63, 67, 72-81,
 100-101, 112, 132-33, 137-39, 141-44, 147,
 150, 152-54, 158, 160-63, 165-68, 172, 174-75,
 177, 179, 181-82, 188, 190-95, 197, 199-204,
 206-209, 211-15, 217-18, 222, 224-25, 227-29,
 231, 235-36, 238-40, 243, 246, 248-50, 253,
 256, 273
adhō-padma, 218, 251, 273
 Ādikēśava-perumāḷ temple, 64, 95, 99, 115, 130, 141
 233
āditala, 73, 100, 145, 156, 158, 160, 162, 254, 267, 273
adittāṇam, 43
 Āditya I, 22, 163
 Ādityavarmaṇ, 233
 Aduru, 65, 73, 219, 263, 267-68
 Advaita philosophy, 14, 21
 Agara, 67
 Agastya, 15
 Agastyēśvara temple, 69, 168, 231
 Agni, 119n
 Agnīśvara temple, 13
agrahāras, 3n
ahaloth, 12n
Ahanānūr u 2n
 Ahichchhatra, 3n
 Aihole, 69, 190, 219, 265
 Aimanam, 124-25, 128, 130
 Aioi, 17
 Aippigai festival, 26, 158
 Airāvatēśvara temple, 91, 93, 231
 Ajanta, 70, 126
 Ājivika, 71
 Alagarkovil, 71, 93
 Alagiapandipuram, 43, 47-48
āḷam, 11n
 Alampur, 69
 Alathur, 51, 53
 Alayakkad, 130
 Albuquerque, 37, 246
āṅga, 73, 179, 190, 199, 248, 273
 Alleppey, 10, 15, 63, 93, 100, 117, 129
alpa-vimāna, 138, 190, 194, 217
 Ālupas, 55, 61, 65-66, 105n, 141, 148, 167, 172, 179
 Ālvārs, 132, 148
 Amaravati, 41n, 69, 71
ambalam, 220
 Ambasamudram, 28
 Ambikā, 52
ambu-mārga, 93, 162, 174, 194, 202, 204, 207, 211,
 215, 218, 238, 248, 273
 Ānandavallīśvara temple, 93
 Anantapadmanābha temple, 104, 122, 129, 197
Anantapuravarṇanam, 134
 Anantaśāyī Viṣṇu, 8, 122, 127, 141, 233, 251
 Ananta shrine, 157
 Anchaikalam, 13n
 Āndhra, Andhra Pradesh, 41n, 67, 69-70, 93, 100-101,
 168, 199
 Angadippuram, 58, 130, 141
aṅga, 73, 248, 273
 Aniruddha, 197
āntara-bhitti, 98, 145, 154, 158, 160, 162, 174, 182,
 261, 263, 269, 273
antarāla, 97, 103, 154, 192, 199, 242, 273
antari, 73, 190, 199, 217, 236, 238, 273
 Anuradhapura, 4, 50
 Aparājita-varmaṇ Pallava, 75
 Apasmārapurusha, 222
 apsidal temple, 61, 63, 67, 69-70, 77, 83, 87, 97-98,
 100, 134, 148, 167-68, 170, 172, 185-87, 200,
 219-20, 222, 225-26, 228, 263, 265
 Aquarius, 27
 Arabs, Arabia, 2, 12, 14, 22, 36-37, 97
 Aramboli Pass, 12
 Araṭṭanami-bhaṭāra, 19
archanā-maṇḍapa, 57, 273
 architrave, 120
arddha-mattali, 112
ardha-maṇḍapa, 45, 54-55, 97, 154, 188, 190, 239,
 273
ardha-paryāṅkāśana, 106, 208
 Ariviyurkkōṭṭai, 17
 Ariyad North, 129

Arjuna, 116
Arthaśāstra, 10
 Aruṇāṭṭārmalai, 41
 Aranmula, 129
 Aṟuṇūṟṟuvar, 202
 Aruvikara, 17
 Arvalem, 62
 Aṣṭabhujaśvāmin Nārāyaṇa, 64n
aṣṭa-dhātu, 121
aṣṭa-dikpālas, 119n
aṣṭāśra, 197, 215, 217
 Aśoka, Aśokan, 10, 16, 50, 231n
 Aśokavana, 251
 Asura, 120
 Atiya, 45, 49
 Atiyaṇ, 17
 Atiyannur, 110
 Atti, 231
 Attingal, 131, 252
 Attirala, 69
 Attivāraṇa, 28
 Attur, 43
 Atula, 32
 Auvaiyar Amman-Kovil, 47
 Avaṭṭattūr, Avaṭṭiputtur, 23-24, 92, 163
 Aṣṭalaṇṇaḍakkaṇ, 18
 Āy, Āy-vēls, 3
 Āy Aṇḍiraṇ, 17
 Ayilur, 41
 Ayini, 181
 Ayyanār, 117
 Ayyappaṇ, Ayyappaṇ shrine, 167-68, 222-23;
 at Maṇjeri, 67, 69, 85; in the Vaḍakkun-
 nātha temple-complex, 100-101; at Panjal,
 220, 222-23; at Panniyur, 161, 163
 Ayyengar, Duraiswami, 2

B

Babylon, 12
 Bacare, 11n
 Badami, 64n
 Bāhubalin, 54
bāhya-bhitti, 154, 156, 158, 162, 174, 182, 199, 203,
 211, 222, 250, 256, 258, 261, 263, 266, 269,
 271, 273
 Baka, 251
 Bālakṛiṣṇa, 109-10, 182
bālālaya, 57
bali, 21

balikkal, *balipīṭha*, 53, 57-58, 99-101, 113, 115, 147,
 174, 177, 195, 206, 217-18, 222, 230-31, 234,
 258, 270, 273
 Bāṇas, 133n
 Baṅgas, 55
 banister, 211, 235, 243, 246, 271
 Bapatla, 91
 Bauddha, Buddha, Buddhism, Buddhist, 4, 6-9, 16,
 19, 41, 50-51, 69-71, 101, 103, 108
 Bekal fort, 39
 Belgola, 67
 Bengal, 123
 beryl mines, 12
 Beypore, 248
bhadra, 67, 104, 144, 152, 156, 158, 169, 236-37, 273
 Bhagavatī, Bhagavatī temple, 7, 85, 97, 101, 107,
 141, 249; at Angadippuram, 130; at Attingal,
 131; at Godapuram, 53; at Kallil, 52-53; at
 Kodungalur, 106, 133, 152-53; at Kumara-
 nallur, 85, 130; Navaikulam, 259; Parthivase-
 kharapuram, 138; Pudukkod, 25; Punalur,
 112, 218; Tenari, 131; Tīruchchāraṇattumalai,
 52; Tiruvalattur, 114, 261-62; Tonnal, 56;
 Trikkandiyur, 228; Valiasalai, 135; Vilinjam,
 64, 106, 139, 141-42
 Bhaktavatsala temple, 67, 93, 235, 238
 Bhakti cult, 2, 6, 21, 39-40, 59, 97, 101, 120, 125,
 227, 232, 248
 Bharanikavu, 50
 Bharata temple, 163
 Bhāskara Ravivarman I, 26, 35, 57, 161, 165; II, 27,
 29, 32; III, 29-30, 195, 197
 Bhaṭṭariyār, 19
 Bhaṭasthali, 33
 Bhatkal, 62, 70
 Bhauma, 119n
 Bhavanārāyaṇa temple, 91
 Bhimavaram, 91, 139
 Bhīmēśvara temple, 91
bhitti, 56, 73, 137, 144, 150, 162, 190-92, 195, 202-
 203, 244, 256, 258, 262, 270, 273
 Bhōja, 188
 Bhrantanpara, 45, 47
 Bhrukuṭi, 51
 Bhū-Dēvī, 115, 117, 122, 197, 222
bhūta, *bhūta-gaṇas*, 99, 111-14, 135, 137, 144, 195, 199,
 207, 215, 218, 225-27, 246, 248, 251, 258, 262
 265, 271

INDEX

Bhūtalavīra-Śrī Vīra Udaya Mārttāṇḍa Varmaṇ, 39,
54, 232
bhūtamālā, 127, 157, 190, 194-95, 254, 262, 273
bhūta-mukha, 204
Bhūtanātha group of temples, 64n
Bhūtapandi, 43
Bhūtaśthānas, 8
bhūta-valabhi, 179, 194-95, 246, 248, 265
Biblical, 103
Bikkavolu, 91, 191
Bodhisattva, 51
bracket figures, 100, 118-19, 209, 229, 248
Brahmā, Brahmā temple, 118-19, 122, 137, 199, 251;
at Tirunavaya, 73; at Tiruvallam, 188,
253-55; at Valiasalai, 135
brahma-kānta, 161, 179, 182, 273
Brāhmaṇa, Brāhmaṇical, 3n, 8, 18, 32-33, 35-36, 39,
41, 51, 53-54, 61, 63, 108, 177, 186-87, 230,
232
Brahma-rākshasa, 256
Brāhmī, 106, 108, 217
Bṛihat-Saṁhitā, 4, 8, 70, 252
Bṛihadiśvara temple, 148
bronzes, 105, 110, 120

C

Caelobothras, 11
Cairo Geniza, 11n
Calicut, also see Kozhikode, 3, 14, 36-37, 167, 228,
232
Calliana, 11n
Cannanore, 10, 26, 32, 34, 51, 55-57, 60-61, 65, 69,
73, 75, 77, 87, 92, 110, 114, 119, 121-22, 173,
175-76, 179, 181, 193, 263-64, 268
cave-temples, 15, 40, 43, 45, 49, 59, 62, 77, 106, 123,
148
Ceylon, Ceylonese, 4, 41
chaitya, 52, 71
Chakrāyudaṇ Mārttāṇḍaṇ, 217
Chālappuṇḍattu-ambalam, 34, 92, 173, 175
Chalapuram temple, 173
Chālukya, Chālukyan, 33, 43, 45, 49, 56, 64-65, 67,
77, 101-102, 106, 119, 123, 156, 211, 267
Champāpati Amman temple, 91
Chāmuṇḍā, 60, 65, 153
Chandēśa, 226, 238, 242
Chandraprabha, 53
changalavāṭṭu, 122
charnockite, 11-12

chaturāṅga-vimāna, 73, 273
Chaturānana-Paṇḍita, 148, 167
chaturmukha temple, 55, 260, 273
chaturvīmśati-paṭṭa, 55
Chauṭas, 55
chhanna-vīra, 105-106, 110
chhatratrayi, 52
Chēdi, 32
Chellūra, 32, 177
Chemmanthatta, 131
Chengannur, 35, 93, 98, 114, 117-18, 120, 219, 249,
269
Chenkāyapan, 43
Chennakēśava temple, 91
Chennamangalam, 100, 219
Chēras, 2-4, 6, 11-14, 16-17, 20, 22-25, 28-31, 34-35,
40-41, 43, 47, 49-51, 53, 64, 73, 97, 107-108,
124, 132-33, 141, 144-45, 147-48, 150, 152,
154, 157-58, 160-61, 163, 166-67, 170, 172-73,
192, 195-97, 200, 211, 237
Chēramāṇ Perumāḷ Nāyanār, 21, 59-60, 122, 152
Cheranallur, 130
Cheranmahadevi, 24, 39, 93, 235, 238
Cherpu, 192, 208
Chettinad, 117
Chidambaram, 148
Chilamakuru, 69, 100, 168
China, Chinese, 2, 12, 14, 36, 232
Chingleput, 91
Chitalar, 19, 54
Chittirai, 26
Chitravāhana I, 65, 105
Chokur, 24
Chōḷas, 4, 10, 12, 16, 18-20, 22-23, 25, 27-31, 34, 56,
69, 79, 91-93, 102, 108-112, 115, 120-21, 136,
138-39, 148, 157, 186-88, 190-91, 200, 208,
211, 218, 231, 233, 238
chlorite schist, 118
Christianity, 22, 38, 97, 232
churches, 23, 38, 118
Chūrnī, 10
Chuṭu-Sātakarṇi, 106n
circular temple, 4, 19, 50, 63, 67, 70-71, 83-84, 97-98,
100-101, 114, 134, 145, 147, 163, 165,
169, 172, 179, 181-84, 186-87, 199-200, 202-
203, 212-13, 217-19, 252-53, 256, 258, 260-61
cire-perdue process, 181
Cochin, 1, 5, 13, 27, 37-38, 130, 234
Cranganur, 10, 13, 37, 84, 92, 137

cruciform plan, 55
Cuddapah, 91-92, 100, 168

D

Dakṣiṇāmūrti, 49, 64, 105-106, 118, 137, 177, 231, 242, 254
dance-scene, 47, 89, 112, 128, 240
Darasuram, 89, 91-92, 231
Darisanamkopu, 187
dāru-garbha, 117, 273
Daśavatāra Viṣṇu, 251
dēva-kōshṭhas, 62, 97, 104, 117, 120, 150, 156-57, 161, 173, 188, 190, 197, 199, 236, 250-51, 273
Dēvaṇ Śaṅkaraṇ, 249
Dēvaram hymns, 109
Dēvasēna, 64n
Dēvī, Dēvī shrine, 65, 230, 242-43
Dhanus (Sagittarius), 27, 30
Dharmarāja-ratha, 111n
Dharwar, 268
dhruva-bhēra, 121
dvaja-stambha, 57-58, 99, 230-31, 243, 254, 261, 273
dīpālas, 119
dināra, *dinarius*, 22
dīpa-lakṣmī, 99, 115-16, 222
dīpa-māḍam, 152, 273
dīpa-stambha, 99, 206, 273
dīpikā-griham, 233
divya-dēśam, 7n, 21n, 91, 133
dolmenoid-cist, 14
Draksharama, 139
Drāviḍa, Dravidian, 1, 10, 12; Drāviḍadēśa, 8, 65, 102, 107, 109-10, 113, 211; Drāviḍa style, 1-2, 8, 18-19, 61-62, 67, 71, 73, 75, 79, 85, 98, 100, 102, 108, 133-35, 137-38, 141, 143, 148, 152, 186, 188, 190-94, 196, 199-200, 202, 206, 208-209, 211, 213, 215, 218-19, 225-26, 234-35, 238-39, 271; Drāviḍa-Kēraḷa style, 1, 18-19, 71, 98, 100, 133-34, 141, 143, 147-48, 186, 191, 240, 263
Durgā, Durgā temple, 7, 67, 118, 219, 265
Dutch, 5, 38, 40, 127, 232
dvāra-pāla, 45, 47, 100, 111, 113-14, 118, 121, 147, 161, 194, 202, 215, 222, 233, 236, 240, 273
dvāra-pālikā, 263, 274
dvitala, 73, 138, 143, 149, 152, 154, 156-57, 160-61, 163, 170, 173, 177, 179, 192-94, 197, 200, 224, 227-28, 233, 274
dwarf figure, 218, 228-29, 236, 238

E

East India Company, 129
Eastern Chālukyas, 91, 191
Edacheri-amsam, 125, 130
Edakkal hill, 54
Edappal, 64, 193, 231
Egypt, 12, 36
Ehavala Chāmtamūla, 230n
ēkabhūmi, *ēkatala*, 73, 173, 175, 188, 204, 206, 208, 222, 239, 254, 258, 274
Elangannupuzha, 130
Eḷiḷmalai, 3, 17, 34
elliptical plan, 63, 71, 73, 100, 234, 269
English, 38
epics, 6, 63, 99-100, 119, 177
Eramam, 34, 92, 95, 107, 173
Eraṇḍamūrti Amman temple, 85
Ernakulam, 10, 13, 24, 26, 52, 57, 92, 100, 115, 119, 130, 154, 163, 200
Ešō da Tapir, 23
Ettumanur, 87, 100, 114, 117, 119-20, 124-25, 128, 130, 200, 252, 259, 271
Europe, European, 2, 12, 14, 17, 37-38, 128-29
Eyyal, 12

F

flag-staff, 231
fort, 38, 131
French, 38
fresco buono, 126

G

gadā, 154
Gajalakṣmī, 122, 194, 240
Gajāntakamūrti, 251
gaja-prishṭhākāra, 167, 220, 222, 227, 263-64, 268, 274
gaja-vyāla, 119, 194, 237 274
Gajēndramōksha, 124
gala-pādas, 135, 137, 143, 150, 157, 166, 172, 177, 182, 188, 201-202, 208, 213, 215, 218, 222, 236, 238, 244, 254, 256, 258, 260, 274
Gambhīra, 34
gaṇas, 111, 147, 250
Gaṇapati, Gaṇapati temple, Gaṇēśa, 45, 104-105, 109, 113, 123, 161, 163, 222, 243, 251, 255-56; at Chilamakuru, 69, 100; at Indyanur, 24, 31, 154; at Kanjirapalli, 239-40; at Kazhakuttam,

INDEX

144-45; at Navaikulam, 258-59; at Nedum-pura, 224; at Panniyur, 163; at Punalur, 217; at Quilon, 79, 89, 236; at Trichur, 204; at Trikkandiyur, 228; at Triprangod, 225-26; at Ullal, 199

Gangaikondacholapuram, 217

Gaṅgas, 83-84, 119

Gaṅgā valley, 3

garbha-griha, 47, 49-50, 54, 58, 62-63, 69, 71, 98, 100-101, 110-11, 117-18, 121, 137-38, 142, 145, 147, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158, 160-62, 166, 175, 179, 190, 192-93, 194-97, 199, 202-203, 206, 208-209, 215, 217-18, 220, 222, 225-28, 234-35, 238-39, 242, 244, 246, 248, 255, 258-59, 261, 265-66, 269, 271, 274

Garuḍa, Garuḍa-*maṇḍapa*, 156-57, 251

Garuḍāntika Viṣṇu, 120

Gemini (Mithuna-*rāśi*), 24

ghana-dvāra, 75, 98, 152, 157, 161, 179, 182, 190, 192-95, 199, 203-204, 207-208, 211, 213, 215, 217, 226-28, 240, 243-44, 248-49, 251, 254, 256, 258, 265, 274

ghaṭa, *ghaṭa-prāsāda*, 71, 253n, 274

Gingee, 89

Goa, 62

Godapuram, 51, 53

Gokarnam, 15

gō-mukha, 101, 112, 160, 175, 194, 202, 204, 207-208, 218, 248, 251, 256, 260, 274

Gōpālasvāmin temple, 28

Gopinath Rao, T.A., 18-19

Gop temple, 101

gō-pura, 58, 99, 101, 116, 124, 154, 161, 177, 226, 230, 234, 261, 269, 274

gō-śālā, 233

Gōvardhana Mārṭṭaṇḍaṇ, 26-27, 35

Gōvardhana shrine, 79, 89, 122, 157, 191

Greece, 12n

Greek lamp, 122

grivā, 71, 73, 100, 135, 138-39, 142, 144, 149, 156, 160-61, 188, 190-94, 197, 199, 202-203, 206, 211, 213, 215, 218-19, 225-27, 229, 237, 243, 246, 248, 250, 254, 256, 258, 262, 264, 274

grivā-kōshṭha, 73, 117-18, 145, 161, 199, 254, 264, 274

Guhanāthasvāmī temple, 92, 188

Gujarat, 102, 119, 123

Gulf of Mannar, 16

Gupta tradition, 5, 41, 101-102

Gurupavanapura, Guruvayur, 39, 131, 233-34

H

Haḍuvalli-rājās, 55

Ḥaidar 'Alī, 40

hall-temple, 188, 190

Hampi, 89

haṁsa, *haṁsa-mālā*, *haṁsa-valabhi*, 135, 138, 144, 179, 274

Haṅgal Kadambas, 3n

Hanumān, 47, 157, 222, 240, 249

hāra, 73, 107-110, 121, 137, 144, 157, 161, 179, 193-94, 199, 202-203, 225-28, 246, 248, 256, 274

hārāntara, 144, 156, 161, 173, 179, 192-93, 204, 206, 225, 227-28, 244, 274

Harihara, 222

Hārīti, 106

hasti-hasta, 99-100, 137, 157, 160-61, 171-72, 174-75, 182, 191, 202, 207, 212, 215, 218, 222, 226-27, 229, 238, 240, 250, 260, 274

hat-stone, 14

Hebrew, 12n

Heliodorous, 230, 231n

Himalayan architecture, 4

Hemavati, 88, 199

Hindu, Hinduism, 38, 232

hiranya, 251

Hiranyakaśipu, 222

hood-stone, 14

Hosaholalu, 119

Hosdurg, 195

Hoysala style, 100-101, 110-11, 113, 118-19, 129, 243

hrīnamālā, 110

Humcha, 191

Huzur office inscription, 17-19, 136

hypaethral temple, 7, 97

I

Ibn Baṭuta, 36, 249

iḍampuri, 105

Iḍavam (Rishabha), 158

Idikki, 10

Ikshvāku, 230n

Ilaiyār, 31n, 58

Ilaṅgo-Adigaḷ, 7, 51

Ilaṅgoppaṭṭinam, 181

Ilaṅ-Kaḍuṅṅoṇ, 41

ilan-kōyil, 57

Īlavār, 50, 71

Imayavarambaṇ Neduñjēral Ādaṇ, 7
 India Office Library, 129
 Indra, 118-19, 137, 254
 Indu-Kōdaivarman, 25-26, 32, 161, 163
 Indyanur, 24, 30-31, 35, 154, 172
 Irāmaguḍa-mūvar, 29, 34, 173
 Irāttayappaṇ shrine, 98, 192, 208-209
 Iravatanēśvara temple, 93
 Iravi-Rāmaṇ, 29
 Iravi-Sāttan, 23
 Irāyaśiṅgaṇ-Perumāṇadigaḷ, 23
 Irinjalakuda, 23, 54, 60, 127, 163
 Irukkuvēḷs, 133n
 Irunilancode, 43, 47
 Īśāna, 119n
 Īśānavarmaṇ, 32-34
 Islam, Islamic, 22-23, 38, 97, 232
 Īśō, 23
ishṭaka-garbha, 117, 274
 Itṭi-kKōmbi, 241
 ivory carving, 103

J

Jagannātha temple, 118
jagati, 53, 75, 135, 137-38, 141, 143, 147, 150, 152, 154, 156-58, 161-62, 165-66, 168-69, 172, 174-75, 177, 179, 181-82, 188, 190-95, 197, 199, 201-202, 204, 206-209, 211, 213-15, 217-18, 222, 226-29, 240, 243-44, 246, 248-50, 253-54, 256, 258-61, 263, 265, 269-71, 274
 Jaina, Jainism, 7-9, 41, 43, 51-55, 103, 122, 129, 260
jāla, *jālaka*, 120, 144, 194-95, 199, 204, 206, 225, 244, 250-52, 260, 265-66, 270, 274
jālaka-pañjara, 209, 274
 Jalanādēśvara temple, 75, 91
 Janārdana temple, 58, 61, 77, 95, 115-16
jaṭā-bhāra, 104-106, 109, 111, 156
Ḥātaka, 123n
 Jaṭavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, 25, 28, 35
 Jaṭila Parāntaka Neduñjaḍaiyaṇ, 17
 Jayarāga, 33
 Jayasimha, 235
 Jews, Jewish copper-plate, 22, 35
 Jina figure, 52-55
jīrṇōddhāra, 58
 Jvarāharēśvara temple, 71
 Judaism, 38
 Jupiter, 24-25, 27-30, 158, 243

K

Kachankurushi temple, 130
 Kadambas, 3n, 106n
 Kadambamahādēvi, 22
 Kaḍambu tree, 7
 Kadappappalli, 173
 Kadinamkulam, 131
kailāsa, 70
 Kailāsanātha temple, 64, 91, 103
 Kaiṭabha, 123
 Kākatiya style, 235
 Kaḷabhra, 20
 Kālamukha sect, 167
 Kaḷaṅgayakaṇṇi Nārmuḍichēral, 7
kalañju, 58, 157, 197
kalaśa-temple, 58, 70, 195
 Kaḷasa-Kārakala rulers, 55
kalaśa-sṭhāpana, 58
 Kālasamhāramūrti temple, 67, 87, 167, 169-70, 225
 Kāli, 228, 251
 Kālidāsa, 15, 126
 Kali era, Kali yuga, 18, 166, 222
 Kaḷikkuḍi, 187
 Kallada, 217
 Kaḷḷaḷagar temple, 71
 Kallil, 52, 54
 Kāliyamardana, 222
 Kāliyamballi-ambalam, 130
 Kaliyappatti, 139
 Kalpathi, 79, 242
 Kalpathipuzha, 242
 Kalpatta, 55
 Kalugumalai, 17, 55
 Kambadahalli, 83n
kamṭa, 53, 75, 135, 137, 141, 143, 147, 150, 153, 156-58, 161, 165-66, 168-69, 172, 174-75, 177, 181-82, 191-92, 194, 199, 202, 204, 211, 213-14, 222, 224, 226, 240, 256, 260-61, 269-70, 274
 Kampaharēśvara temple, 89, 231
 Kanarese style, 62
 Kāñchī, Kanchipuram, 20, 71, 91, 93, 232
 Kāndaḷūr-śālai, 18, 134, 136, 187
 Kāṇḍaṇ-Kārivarman, 34, 173
 Kandiyur, 56, 60, 77, 117, 150, 249
 Kanjirapalli, 239
 Kannagi, 4
 Kaṇṇaṇ, 124, 206

INDEX

- Kannapuram, 34, 173-75
 Kaṇṇēśvara temple, 109
 Kannirangad, 129
 Kaṇṇi-rāṣi (Virgo), 24
 Kanniparamba, 248
 Kannuru, 197
 kaṇṭha, 53, 75, 135, 137-38, 141, 143, 147, 150, 152-53, 156-58, 160-62, 165-66, 168-69, 172, 174-75, 177, 179, 181-82, 188, 190-97, 199, 202, 204, 206-209, 211, 213-15, 217-18, 222, 224-29, 235-36, 238, 240, 243-46, 248-50, 254, 256, 258-61, 263, 265-66, 269-71, 274
 Kanyakumari, 12, 15, 17-18, 35, 40, 43, 47, 54, 61, 92, 95, 115, 130, 134, 138, 213, 233
 kaṇṭha, 73, 75, 77, 133, 135, 137-38, 143-44, 150, 156-57, 160, 166, 177, 182, 190, 193-95, 199, 201-202, 204, 207-208, 211, 213, 215, 217, 222, 225, 227, 236-38, 240, 243-44, 246, 248, 251, 254, 256, 260-262, 270, 274
 kaṇṭha-bandha, 165-66, 172, 203-204, 222, 228, 260, 274
 kaṇṭha-pañjara, 104, 156, 194
 Karaikkōṭṭai, 17
 Karikkad-kshetram, 56, 67, 69, 130, 167, 200, 203
 Karkal, 55, 89, 197
 Karkāṭaka, 30
 Karmudi, 50
 karṇa, 104, 152, 156, 158, 161, 236-37, 274
 karṇa-kūṭas, 248
 Karṇāṭaka, Kannaḍa, 58, 65, 67, 70, 83, 89, 91, 230
 Kārtikeya, 58
 Karuvakkavu temple, 173
 Karunandaḍakkaṇ, 17-20, 57, 95, 135, 145
 Karur, 13, 41, 49
 Karurapadna, 13
 Karuvūr, 13, 43
 Karyad-amsam, 26, 55
 Kasargod, 55, 197, 265, 268
 Kāśi, 241
 Kāśyapaśilpa, 75
 kaṭaka-valayas, 107-11, 121
 Kathākali, 39, 122, 125
 kaṭi, kaṭi-hasta, kaṭi-sūtra, 47, 53, 104, 106-108, 110, 121, 156-57, 199
 Kaṭṭil-māḍam, 61, 190, 213
 kaṭṭu, 45, 54, 213
 kaṭyāvalambita-hasta, 107, 111
 Kaumārī, 65, 104, 106, 142-43
 Kauṭilya, 10, 34
 Kavandra, 31n
 Kāvērī, 41
 Kaviyalppuram, 181
 Kaviyur, 43, 45, 49, 77, 92, 98, 117-18, 120, 150, 165, 200, 249
 Kavundara, 58
 Kavur, 109
 Kayankulam, 129
 Kayiliyad, 58
 Kaykkotta Namputiri, 124
 kāyōtsarga pose, 53
 Kazhakuttam, 56, 58, 60, 77, 107, 119, 143
 Keralaputra, 16
 Kēraḷa style, 1-2, 8, 10, 16, 24, 29, 33, 45, 54, 62, 71, 83, 99, 101-102, 113, 118, 120-21, 124, 25, 129, 135, 138, 141, 186, 190-91, 194, 202, 206, 208, 215, 218, 237-38, 246, 253
 Kētu, 119
 kēyūra, 107-11, 116, 156
 Kidangur, 89, 112, 119, 127, 130
 Kīlappērūr, 139
 Kīlātālī Śiva temple, 60, 64, 84, 92, 104-105, 107, 137, 152, 158, 160, 162-63, 194
 Killukurichi Śiva temple, 131
 Kilmavilangai, 47
 kiṭi-vāsal, 73, 274
 Kirātārjunīya, 119, 128-29, 251
 kirīṭa, 110, 117, 121, 127, 196
 Kizhavellur, 69, 87, 115, 219-20, 229
 Kō-Ātaṇ Chēl Irumpōrai, 41, 43
 Kōchchaḍaiyaṇ, 50
 Kōdai-Kēraḷaṇ, 27
 Kōdai-Kēraḷavarmaṇ, 35, 187
 Kōdai-Ravi, Kōdai-Ravivarmaṇ, 23-25, 31-33, 35, 154, 160, 163, 170
 Kodakkal, 130
 Kōḍavalam Viṣṇu temple, 98, 195-96
 Koduman, 101
 Kodungalur, also see Cranganur, 60, 64, 106, 131, 133, 152
 Koduvalli, 248
 Kō-Kōdai, 58
 Kō-Kōdai-Kōdai, 31
 Kolachel, 40
 Kolam, 3, 134, 172
 Kolar, 91
 Kōlatīrī Rājā, 34-37, 232, 265
 Kōlattunāḍ, 35
 Kollam, 34, 36, 79, 93, 234, 237
 Kollam era, 59
 Kollangod, 130

Koṅgu country, Koṅgu-nāḍu, 12-13, 22, 41, 61
 Koṅṛavai, 7
kōshṭhas, 225, 248, 270
kōshṭha-pañjara, 206, 217, 227-28
 Kō-Śrīvaḷarāma, 31, 154, 172
 Kōteshwar, 105
 Kottarakara, 57, 92, 133
 Kottayam, 10, 12, 15, 22-23, 25-26, 35, 63, 69, 71, 85, 87, 89, 92, 100, 112, 114-15, 117, 119, 124, 127-28, 130, 165, 220, 234, 239, 259, 269
 Kottukal, 43, 47
 Koviladi, 91
 Kovindēśvaraṇ Kodai, 161
 Kovini-thalam, 127-28
 Kōyilādhikāri, 23, 30, 237
 Kozhikode, also see Calicut, 10, 26, 30, 34, 55, 87, 100, 109, 113, 167, 172, 228, 246, 248
Kramadipikā-Vyākhyā, 235
 Kramrisch, Stella, 1, 108, 139, 141, 188
 Kṛishṇa, Kṛishṇa-līlā, 3n, 51, 97, 128, 223, 234, 251
 Kṛishṇa shrine, Kṛishṇa temple at Guruvayur, 39, 125, 131, 233; at Kannapuram, 176, 179; at Kazhakuttam, 145; at Netirimangalam, 149; at Parthivasekharapuram, 138, 188; at Podiyal, 110, 243; at Tirkodittanam, 92, 130, 163; at Tirukkulasekharapuram, 21, 59-60, 64, 75, 79, 83-84, 89, 92, 97, 104, 112, 154, 158, 191; at Tiruvallam, 253; at Trichchambaram, 64, 119, 129, 177; at Trikkandiyur, 228; at Triprangod, 225; in Vadakkunnatha temple-complex, Trichur, 218; at Valiasalai, 135
 Krishnapuram, 124, 129, 191
kshudra-vimāna, 218
 Kubera, 119n
kucha-bandha, 105
kuḍai-kal, 14
kuḍakuttu, 112
 Kūḍalmānikkam temple, 23, 54, 60, 127, 163
 Kuḍam, 33n
 Kuḍamalaināḍu, 33n
kūḍus, 135, 190, 193-94, 204, 217, 236, 238, 243, 254, 262, 274
kuḍya-stambhas, 110, 135, 137-38, 144, 150, 152, 156, 161, 165, 177, 190, 192-95, 199, 202, 204, 206, 209, 212-13, 217, 225-28, 237, 240, 243-44, 248-49, 251, 254, 256, 258-59, 262, 265, 268, 270, 274
kukkuṭa, 111
kukkuṭāṇḍa, 269
kula-saṅgha, 16, 34

Kulaśēkharas of Mahōdayapuram, 3, 20, 34-36, 49, 50
 Kulaśēkhara I, Āḷupa king, 55
 Kulaśēkharavarmaṇ, Kulaśēkhara-āḷvār, 20-21, 32, 59-60, 154, 157
 Kulōttuṅga I, 29-30
 Kulōttuṅga III, 13, 89, 188, 231
 Kumaranallur, 85, 130
 Kumāraṇ Iravi, 160
 Kumāraṇ Nārāyaṇaṇ, 98
 Kumarapuram, 115
 Kumaraṇ-Kaṇḍaṇ, 258
Kumāra-Sambhava, 128
kumbha, 156, 195, 225, 274
 Kumbha-rāṣi (Aquarius), 27
kumbhābhishēka, 258
 Kumbala, 197
 Kumbalanad, 124, 128, 131
kumuda, 75, 135, 137, 143, 147, 150, 152-54, 160, 165-66, 169, 172, 174-75, 177, 181-82, 188, 197, 201-202, 207-208, 211, 214-15, 217-18, 220, 223, 225-27, 229, 235-36, 238, 246, 254, 256, 258-61, 270-71, 274

kuṇḍalas, 107, 121, 196
 Kundavarmaṇ, 32-33
 Kundil-Varāha, 163
 Kunjalis, 38
 Kunjan Pillai, Elamkulam, 18, 26, 28
 Kunnatali Śiva temple, 219
 Kunnathumalai, 249
 Kunnattur, 47
 Kunnumēl, 249
 Kuntala, 3n
 Kurakkēṇi-Kollam, 23, 235
 Kurari temple, 70
 Kurnool, 69
 Kuruvakkāva temple, 34, 92, 175
kūṭas, 137, 144, 193, 229, 248
kūṭtambalam, 73, 99, 206, 218, 230
 Kuttanad, 190
Kuvalayamālā, 134

L

Laccadive, Lakshadweep, 10
 Lad Khan, 190
 Lakkidiperur II, 131
 Lakshmī, 264
 Lakshminārāyaṇa, 115; shrine in Ayyappaṇ temple-complex, Panniyur, 84, 162-63, 194; at Hosahalolu, 119; at Nuggihalli, 119
lalāta-bimba, 211, 236, 240-41, 250-51, 275

INDEX

lamp-pillar, 57
lāñchhana, 53, 65
 Latin church, 38
 Lava, 175
 Leiden grant, 50n
 Leo (Siṃha), 25
 Lepakshi temple, 89
 Libra (Tulā), 27-28, 30
liṅga, *liṅga-piṭha*, 45, 47, 49, 145, 192, 209, 211, 225, 227, 256, 260, 275
 Logan, W., 2, 3n, 63
lupā, 5, 191, 193, 217, 227, 275

M

māḍakkōvil, 98, 192, 275
 Māḍattilappaṇ temple, 73, 98, 192-93, 208-209
 Mādhavāchārya, 21
 Madhu, 123
madhya-nāḍi, 263
 Madras Museum grant, 17
 Madurai, 20, 39, 45, 93
 Mahabalipuram, 93, 111n
Mahābhārata, 39, 125, 128
 Mahādēva, 255; Mahādēva shrine at Chengannur, 73, 98, 114, 117, 120, 249, 269; at Ettumanur, 120, 124, 130, 200; at Kadinamkulam, 131; at Kaviyur, 92, 98; at Kazhakuttam, 56, 64, 107, 143; at Perumpaladur, 18; at Poretam, 92; at Tillaisthanam, 22; at Tiruvallam, 85; at Uliyannur, 98; at Valiasalai, 61, 79, 115, 134, 138, 188
 Mahākūṭa inscription, 33
 Mahākūṭēśvara temple, 64n
 Mahālakshmi, 127
 Mahāliṅgēśvara temple, 73, 100, 219, 263, 268
 Mahāvira, 52-54
 Mahāvishṇu temple, 163
 Māhēśvarī, 65
 Mahishamardani, 113
 Mahodayapuram, 20, 30, 34, 37, 154, 158
 Maitrakas, 65
makara, 105, 150, 156, 182, 222, 225, 244, 248
makara-lōraṇa, 55, 137, 179, 190, 194, 199, 209, 213, 242, 244, 248, 254, 265, 275
 Malabar, Melibar, 2, 10-11, 17, 30, 32, 38-40, 63, 129
 Malaināḍu, 17, 21n
 Malaiyadiḥkurichchi, 49
 Malanāḍu, 10-11
 Malappuram, 10, 30, 35, 56, 69, 77, 87, 98, 111, 114, 141, 167, 170, 193, 200, 202, 225, 227
 Malayalam, 1, 11, 31, 39, 61n, 134, 152, 199, 234, 267
 Mālegitti-Śivālaya, 64n
 Malik Kāfur, 232
 Mammiyur, 234
 Mamballi copper-plate, 27
mālā-sthāna, 195, 275
 Mānābharaṇa, 28-29
 Mānacherry Śiva temple, 129
 Maṇalmaṇṇam, 29
 Manambur, 117
 Mananchira tank, 246
 Manantoddy, 55
 Maṇattupai, 181
 Maṇavāḍu, 160
mañcha, *mañchaka*, 53, 135, 139, 142-43, 158, 195, 197, 215, 218, 235, 242, 249, 254, 256, 261, 275
 Mañchiṇṇai-tirumalai-dēvar, 139
maṇḍapa, 58, 98, 102, 115, 193, 209, 214, 233, 275
 Mangalapadi, 69, 87, 219, 265
 Maṅgalēśa, 33
 Mangalore, 62, 199
 Manigramam community, 23, 181
Maṇimekalai, 8, 50
 Maniyur, 92, 111, 121
 Mañjeri, 56, 67, 69, 79, 85, 130, 200, 203
 Mañjeshwara, 55
 Manmatha, 116
 Mannar, 129
 Mannar-koyil, 28
 Manukulādichchadēvar, 30, 197
Manushyālayachandrikā, 5
 Māṇvarmaṇ, 20-21, 35, 231
 Māraṇ Chēndaṇ, 49n
 Maraṇjaḍaiyaṇ, 17, 22n
 Maratha painting, 123
 Marco Polo, 11, 36, 249, 265
 Mārkaṇḍēya, 251
 Mārttāṇḍa Varma, 40, 232
 Marudurkulangarai, 50
 Maruvāṇ Sapīr Īśō, 23
Mātrigaṇas, *mātrikās*, 65, 104-106, 116, 139, 141, 143, 158, 217
 Matsyamūrti, 188, 253
 Mattancheri palace, 5, 118, 125-27, 130, 234
 Mavelikara, 50
 Maya, 8
 Māyappāḍi, 268
 megalithic, 14, 16

Mēlkkāḍu, 249
 Menon, Shridhar, 28
 metal image, 120-22
 Mīmāṃsā, 134, 136
 Miñchirai, Muñchirai, 18, 134, 138-39
 miniature painting, 123
 Mithuna (Gemini), 24
 Miyaṇamaṅgalam, 24, 160
 Mōhinī, 108, 128
 mosques, 38, 118
 Mount D'Eli, 17, 34, 181
 Mudbidri, 55, 129
mukha-maṇḍapa, 56, 63-64, 69, 98, 113, 137-38,
 143, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158, 160-62, 167, 172,
 174-75, 177, 179, 192-95, 199, 222, 225, 228,
 235, 238, 241, 246, 248-49, 254, 265-67,
 269, 275
 Mūlavāsa, 50-51
 Mundur Śiva temple, 131
 Munjira, 61, 134, 138, 187
 murals, 6, 39, 100, 103, 123, 125-28, 148, 206, 209,
 231, 234, 251
 Murdeshwar, 70
 Mūshikas, 3, 16, 25, 29, 32-34, 51, 64, 95, 97, 107,
 132-33, 148, 172-73, 176-77, 179, 181, 265
Mūshika-varṇa, 16, 24, 32-33, 51, 177
 Muttaraiyars, 77, 106, 133n
 Muyirikota, 10
 Muzhikulam, 25
 Muziris, 2, 10, 13-14
 Mysore, Mysorean, 40, 67

N

Nachna Kuthara, 102
nāga, *nāgakaḷ*, 53-54, 114, 157, 228, 237, 254
 Nāgara, 85
 Nāgarāja temple, 54
 Nagari, 71
 Nagarjunakonda, 64, 102, 230
 Nagercoil, 12, 54
 Nagirie, 55
 Nagnajita, 8
Naiyāyikā-darśana, 134
nāla, 100, 112, 114, 161-162, 182, 194, 204, 215,
 228-29, 238, 246, 270
nālabalam, 5, 97, 101, 116, 157, 174, 177, 182, 191,
 194-95, 202, 206, 209, 212-15, 217-18, 222,
 225-26, 228-29, 233, 238, 242-43, 246, 250,
 253-54, 258, 260-61, 265, 269-70, 275

Naliampalayam, 41
 Nalliur, 41
 Naltuṇai-Īśvara temple, 91
nālukattu, 5
nālu-taḷi, 5, 158
 Namakkal, 41, 45, 49
namaskāra-maṇḍapa, 54, 57, 64, 97-99, 101, 117, 119,
 137, 139, 143, 147, 149-50, 152, 156, 160-61,
 165, 174-75, 179, 182, 193-95, 197, 202, 206,
 209, 212-15, 217-18, 222-23, 225-26, 228-29,
 233, 235, 238, 243-44, 248-49, 254, 256, 258,
 260-61, 264-65, 269, 271, 275
 Nambudiri, 3, 25, 31, 35, 70, 124
 Nāmmālvār, 19, 21n, 107, 133, 141
 Nandagōpāla, 157, 248
 Nandalur, 92
nandi, *nandi-maṇḍapa*, 47, 64, 118, 209, 215, 218, 226,
 243, 248, 254, 260
 Nandinī, 32
 Nandiśvara temple, 98
 Nañjināḍ, 35, 39
 Naṇṇaṇas, 3, 17
 Nannēśvara shrine, 226
 Naṇṇulai-nāḍu, 26, 29
 Nāraṇattukkāvu, 145
 Narasiṁha, Narasiṁhamūrti, 118, 137, 181, 197, 222,
 227, 251, 254, 257; temple at Belgola, 67; at
 Chengannur, 97, 117, 120
 Nārāyaṇa (author of *Tantrasamuchchaya*), 5, 252
 Nārāyaṇa Bhattātiri, 39, 125
 Naṭarāja, 121-22, 124-25, 251, 259-60
 Naura, 10, 14
nava-graha, 117, 119
 Navaikulam, 252, 258
 Navamukunda temple, 111
 Nāyakas, 39, 95, 99-100, 113, 115-16, 129, 258, 270
 Nāyanmārs, 132, 148
 Nāyar, 37, 40
 Nedumpura, Nedumpuṇaiyur, 24, 26, 160, 208, 223
 Nelcynda, 11, 14
 Nemam, 60, 64, 79, 92, 106, 108, 215
 Nepal, 4-5, 123
 Nerur, 13
 Netirimangalam, 77, 83, 148-49
 Nīlgiri hills, 12
nirandhāra, 97, 132, 143, 150, 165, 167, 182, 191, 197,
 200, 220, 222, 226-29, 235, 239, 242, 254, 261,
 275
 Nīramaṅkara temple, 60, 79, 82, 106, 108, 113, 215
 Nīṇṇiti, 119n

INDEX

Nityaprajñamūṇi, 235
Nityavichārēśvara, 24, 26, 220
Nōlamba, 65, 101, 133n, 199
Nṛiparāma, 33

O

oblong plan, 54, 69, 97, 168
Oḍanāḍu, 56
Oṇam, 23
Orissa, Orissan, 102, 118
orṛaikkal-maṇḍapa, 233
oryza, 12n
Ottapalam, 149, 161, 190

P

pādas, 137, 147, 150, 161, 177, 193-95, 202, 204, 206-207, 209, 211, 213-14, 217-18, 222, 225, 227-28, 238, 240, 242-43, 254, 256, 258, 265, 270, 275
pāda-bandha, 75, 275
padigam, 6-7
Padirruppattu, 7, 16
padmas, 218
padma-bandha, 195
padma-dalas, 240
padma-jagati, 236, 238
padmākṛiti, 70
Padmanābhapuram palace, 5, 118, 125, 130
Padmanābhavāmī temple, 19, 35, 64, 107, 115, 131, 133, 141, 187
Padmāvatī-dēvī, 7, 52
padma-nidhi, 236, 250
padma-pādukā, 101, 141, 193, 204, 208, 222, 236, 238, 275
padma-piṭha, 117, 275
padma-prāsāda, 70, 206, 275
padma-sākhā, 236, 240
padmāsana, 52
padma-valabhi, 160, 237, 275
Pahari school, 123
Pālaka, 33, 38
Palampet, 89
Palghat, 10, 12, 25, 35, 45, 49, 51, 53, 59, 61, 64, 75, 77, 79, 83-85, 111, 114, 126, 131, 148-49, 161, 165, 209, 215, 242-43
Paliyam grant, 19-20
Palk strait, 16
Pallava, Pallava architecture, 15, 20, 41, 45, 47, 49, 56, 64, 77, 83, 85, 91, 93, 101, 103-104, 106-107, 111, 123, 139, 150, 157, 200

Pallikkal, 50
Pallimanna Śiva temple, 124, 128, 131
Pallipuram, 115
palliyara, 127
Palliyarkavu, 131
Palyanai Śelkeḷu-Kuṭṭuvaṇ, 6-7
paṇam, 59
Panamalai, 91, 103
Panayannarkavu, 129
Pañchakūṭa-Basti, 83n
pañcha-lōha, 121
pañcha-prākāra, 177, 230, 261, 275
Pāṇḍava-Śāstā temple, 124, 130
Pāṇḍimaṇḍalam, 49, 61, 107, 132, 188, 190
Pāṇḍya, Pāṇḍya architecture, 10, 12, 15-17, 20-22, 24-25, 28, 30, 35, 41, 43, 45, 49-50, 62, 83, 85, 97, 102-104, 106, 123-24, 139, 191, 231, 234, 240
paṇimakkal, 173
Panjal, 131, 219-20, 222, 226
pañjara, 137, 144, 152, 172, 192-93, 225, 228-29, 248, 270, 275
pañjara-kōshṭha, 165, 177
Panniyur, 84, 161
Pantalayani Kollam, 34
Papanasam, 69
Paramasivam, S., 125
Paramēśvara, 21
Paraṇar, 7
Parāntaka I, 20, 22-23, 25
Parāntaka Pāṇḍya, 187
Parappankod, 122
paraśu, 15, 218
Paraśurāma, 3n, 15-16, 264
Paraśurāmēśvara temple, 69, 71, 79, 85, 188, 208, 252-54
Parauli, 70
Parekh, J., 125
Pārśvanātha, 52-54
Pārthasārathi, 154
Pārthasārathi temple, 61, 135
Parthivapuram, Pārthivaśēkharapuram, 18, 20, 61, 135-38, 187-88, 199
Parur, 36
Pārvatī, 102, 113, 121, 208, 215
pāśa, 105
patra-kunḍala, 109, 111
paṭṭa, 121, 156, 161
Pattadakal, 64n
Pattambi, 83

paṭṭikā, 53, 75, 135, 137-38, 141, 143, 147, 150, 152, 156, 158, 160-62, 165, 168-69, 174-75, 179, 181-82, 190-95, 197, 199, 204, 206, 208-209, 213, 215, 217-18, 222, 224, 226-29, 235-36, 240, 242-44, 246, 248-50, 256, 258-59, 261-63, 265-66, 269-71, 275
 Pattini cult, 7-8
 Payyannur, 87, 100, 114, 119, 218, 264, 268
 Pazhur, 119, 130
 Pedra Alvarez Gabral, 37
 Peramangalam, 131
 Perinthalamanna, 141
 Periplus, 2, 11, 13-14
 Periyar river, 13, 37
 Periyakkudi, 19
 Persia, 11n
 Perumannam, 131
 Perumbavur, 52
 Perumpaladur, 18-19, 57, 95, 145, 147
 Peruneyil, 26-28, 30, 92
 Perun-Kudungōṇ, 41
 Peruntirukkoyil, 24, 92, 119, 130, 163, 200, 213
 Peruvanam, 73, 87, 98, 111, 114, 119, 125, 192, 208-209
phalaka, 62, 112, 182, 194-95, 204, 207-208, 211, 217, 222, 240, 248-49, 256, 263, 271, 275
 Phoenicia, 12
 Pipīlikēśvara temple, 91
 Pisces (Mīna), 25, 29
pīṭha, 53, 55, 105, 111, 211, 218, 227-28, 238, 256, 275
 Pitikayagulla, 69
 Pliny, 11
 Podiyal, 243
poduval, 24, 163, 195, 208
 Polali, 65, 105n, 116-17, 142
 Polpulli, 58, 64, 75, 145, 165
 Poretam, 92
 portico, 137, 239-40, 246, 259-60
 Portuguese, 2-3, 5, 14, 35, 38, 63, 127
pōtikas, 179, 190, 192, 209, 217, 228, 240
prabhāvali, 105, 107, 110-11, 117, 122
pradakṣhiṇā, *pradakṣhiṇā-patha*, 5, 65, 98-100, 115, 137, 147, 154, 156, 161, 166, 175, 182, 192, 194-95, 197, 199-200, 202-203, 206, 209, 211, 213, 218, 220, 222, 225-26, 243, 250, 254-55, 259-60, 265, 268, 269, 275
 Pradyumna, 197
prākāra, 58, 99, 139, 145, 157-58, 177, 206, 214, 230, 254, 256, 259, 261, 264, 275
 Prākṛit-*chamṭu*, 20

praṇāla, 62, 99, 101, 111-12, 114, 137, 139, 150, 154, 160, 162, 174-75, 179, 182, 195, 197, 199, 202, 204, 207-209, 211-12, 215, 217-18, 222, 225, 227-29, 231, 238, 240, 243, 246, 251, 256, 258, 260, 262, 264-66, 270-71
 Prasanna-Sōmēśvara temple, 61, 67, 69
prastara, 56, 62, 73, 137, 144-45, 149, 157, 161, 165, 182, 190-91, 193-94, 199, 213, 215, 217, 225, 227, 229, 240, 246, 248, 254, 256, 260, 262, 276
prati, 77, 201-202, 204, 214, 236, 238, 244, 260, 263, 270, 276
prati-bandha, 75, 276
prishṭha-svastika pose, 112
 Ptolemy, 2, 11, 13, 17
 Pudukkod, 25
 Pudukkottai, 45, 47, 67, 124, 139
 Pugalur, 13, 41, 43
 Pulakesin II, 106n
 Puliur, 21
 Pullur, 26, 30, 98, 121, 129, 195
 Pulpatta, 79, 87, 98, 202
 pulpits, 118
 Punalur, 79, 92, 95, 112, 115, 217, 227
 Punjai, 41, 91, 93
 Puntanam Nambudiri, 39, 125, 233
Puṣanānūṇu, 6
Purāṇas, 6, 39, 63, 99-100, 120, 125, 250-51
 Puṣattāya-nāḍu, 187
 Puri, 118
pūrṇa-ghaṭa, *pūrṇa-kumbha*, 161, 172, 215, 228, 251
putrakāmēṣṭi-yāga, 127
 Puttur, 24, 55
 Puzhakkal, 131

Q

Quilandy, 34
 Quilon, 10, 14, 23, 30, 36, 38, 50, 57, 62, 79, 92-93, 95, 112, 115, 131, 133, 215, 217, 234, 237

R

rafter-shoes, 122
 Raghunātha Dēvasthāna, 62
 Raghupati, 33
Raghuvaṁśa, 15
 Rāhu, 119
 Rājā of Cochin, 38
 Rājā of Idappalli, 36
 Rājā of Kōlatīri, 37

INDEX

Rājādhirāja I, 21, 29, 34, 187
 Rājādhirāja II, 231
 Rājādhirāja III, 188
 Rājāditya, 167
 Rājarāja I, 18, 20, 27, 45n, 50n, 187
 Rājarāja II, 231
 Rājarājadēva, 29
 Rājarājapperuñchalai, 134
 Rājarājēśvara temple, 64, 77, 176-77, 179
 Rājarājēśvarī temple, 65, 104, 142, 177
 Rājaśekhara, Rājaśekhavarman, 21-22, 32, 59-60, 152, 167
 Rājasimha, 23, 28, 50
 Rajasthan, 20
 Rājendra I Chōla, 18-19, 27-28, 34, 135, 139, 167, 173, 177, 187, 190
 Rajput school, 123
 Rāma, 56, 112-13, 116, 127-28, 172, 194, 201, 203, 208-209, 220, 222, 249; shrine at Thiruvillamala, 114; at Tripurar, 79, 98, 119
 Rāmaghaṭa, 33-34
 Rāmakuṇḍam, 33n, 34, 173
 Rāmalingēśvara temple, 67
 Rāmaṇ-Kōḍavarman, 56
 Rāmaṇ Tiruvaḍi, 30
 Ramanathapuram, 22n, 45, 177
 Ramantali, 56, 60, 75, 84, 109-11, 145, 181
 Rāmāyaṇa, 39, 119, 123, 125, 127, 260
 Rāma Varma, 40
 Rāmavarma Kulaśekhara, 30-32, 34, 235, 237
 Rāmavarman (of Cochin), 152
 Rāmavarman Kulaśekhara, 31-32, 35
 Rāmavarmapuram-aharam, 124
 Rāmēśvara temple, 30, 79, 93, 100, 235, 237
 Raṇadhīra, 50
 Raṇakīrtti, 50
 Rāshtrakūṭas, 67, 117
 ratna-kunḍala, 109, 111
 Ravi-Kēraḷavarman, 56
 Ravi-Rāmavarman, 29
 Ravi Varma, 39
 Ravivarma Kulaśekhara, 22, 29, 233
 Rayiram Kuṇḍatt Paṅgi, 242
 rectangular plan, 63-65, 101, 139, 141, 143
 relief sculptures, 119-20
 Rēnāṇḍu, 69
 Rishabha, 27, 54, 158
 rock-architecture, 12, 14-15, 40-41, 43, 45, 47, 49-50, 54, 61, 103-104, 150, 165
 rock-shelter, 13, 41, 52-55

Roman Catholic church, 39
 Rome, Roman, 2, 7, 11-13, 22, 39

S

Sabarimalai, 108, 263
 sabhā, 18, 23
 Sabhāpati (Naṭarāja), 121-22
 Śaḍaiyaṇ Karunandaṇ, 17
 Sadāśiva temple, 69
 Saḍayar-kōvil, 91
 śaduram, 45, 54, 213, 276
 Sagittarius (Dhanus), 27
 Śaiva, Śaivism, Śaivite, 19, 21-22, 39-40, 47, 49, 61, 120-21
 Sākkiyar Bhagavatī temple, 53
 Śakti, 238
 śakti-āyudha, 111
 śalai, 18, 20, 134, 136, 187
 śālā-pañjara, 161, 193, 204, 225
 śālās, 137, 193, 229, 248, 276
 śālā-sikhara, 150, 179, 194-95, 199, 217, 237, 243, 246, 248, 258, 265, 276
 Salem, 12, 14
 sama-bhaṅga, 107-108, 110-11
 sama-chaturāśra, 64, 138, 148, 150, 154, 173, 196-97
 sama-pāda, 47, 120
 Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtra-dhāra, 188
 Sambarapura, 32, 177
 Sambhukal, 61
 samudga, 4, 70
 samudra, 70
 sāndhāra, 5, 20, 63, 67, 97-98, 100-101, 132, 138, 145, 154, 157-58, 160-62, 172, 174-75, 182, 186, 193-94, 196, 199, 202, 209, 211-12, 218, 220, 229, 238, 244, 246, 248, 255, 258, 263, 265-66, 268, 270, 276
 Śaṅgam age, 2-3, 6-7, 12-13, 16, 19, 34, 43
 Śaṅgamēśvara, 64n
 saṅgha, 19, 20
 Śani, 119n
 Śaṅkarācharya, 14
 Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, 258; shrine at Navaikulam, 252, 258; at Trichur, 124, 204; at Trikkangod, 131
 Śaṅkara-vijaya, 21
 Śaṅkarshaṇa, 197
 śaṅkha, 107-108, 110, 117, 121, 147, 154, 196, 199
 Śaṅkha-nidhi, 207, 236, 250
 Santānagōpālakrishṇa temple, 24, 154
 Santara temples, 191

- Sapta-mātrikās, 60, 64-65, 97, 101, 104-107, 109, 139, 160, 258
- Sarasvatī, 113, 249
- sarvatōbbhadra*, 97-98, 145, 157-158, 166, 181, 187, 194, 196, 202-203, 212, 215, 220, 222, 260, 265-66, 268, 270, 276
- Śāstā, Śāstā temple, 60, 93, 97, 100-101, 104, 107-108, 111, 122, 135, 138, 145, 163, 182, 195, 197, 206, 224, 226, 253-54, 263
- Sastankotta, 93, 108
- śāstra-bāhya*, 134
- Sastri, K.A. Nilakanta, 22
- Sastasoma, 32
- Satiyaputra, 10
- Śāttanar, 8
- Śāttankuḷaṅkarai Narasiṁha temple, 249
- satva-paryāṅka* pose, 53
- Satyavāgīśvara, 45
- Sendalai, 75
- Śēndaṇ, 31n, 58
- Śenguttuvaṇ, 4, 7-8
- Śēshasāyi Viṣṇu, 123, 127
- setubandhana*, 251
- Sevvalpatti, 45
- Sewell, 18
- shaḍāṅga-vimāna*, 190
- Shore temple, 93
- śikhā-maṇi*, 107, 197, 206, 215, 217, 233, 235, 248, 263
- śikhara*, 18, 62-63, 71, 73, 98, 100, 102, 135, 138-39, 142, 148-49, 160, 182, 188, 190-92, 202, 208-209, 211, 213, 218-19, 227, 237, 250, 254, 256, 258, 260, 276
- Śilappadikāram*, 7-8
- Śilparatna*, 5, 70-71, 77, 252
- Śimha* (Leo), 25, 207
- śimha-mālā*, 137-38, 144, 191, 194, 218, 235, 243-44, 246, 248, 250, 262
- śimha-mukha*, 101, 112, 137, 175, 182, 204, 211, 218, 228-29, 270
- śimhāsana*, 53
- śiraschakra*, 105
- Sītā, 127, 222, 251
- Sittanavasal, 124
- Śiva, 7-8, 19, 32, 45, 47, 49, 89, 97, 101, 107, 112, 115-16, 121, 128, 135, 138, 145, 158, 191, 218, 222, 227, 229, 238-40, 248-49, 251, 254, 263
- Sivagiri, 43
- Śiva temple, Anakkara, 58; Avattattur, 24, 92; Beypore, 248; Chemmanthatta, 131; Chennamangalam, 100; Draksharama, 139; Ettu-
- manur, 87, 100, 117, 119, 252, 259, 271; Kandiyyur, 56, 60, 77, 92, 150, 153; Kaviyur, 117, 120, 165, 200, 259; Munchirai, 138, Nedumpura, 16, 220, 223; Netirimangalam, 61, 149; Palliyurkavu, 131; Perutirukko-yillappaṇ, 213; Peruvanam, 87, 111, 114, 119, 131, 192; Polpulli, 58, 64-65, 165; Pulpatta, 87, 98, 202; Puzhakkal, 131; Sukapuram, 99; Tali, 75, 84, 160; Thiruvanchikulam, 21, 60, 152; Tirukkattuppalli, 91; Tirukkūlasekharapuram, 59; Tirunelli, 98; Tirunillai, 63, 85, 87, 98, 215; Tiruvannur, 172, 228; Tiruvarai, 114; Trikkandiyur, 67, 167, 170, 227-28; Trikkangod, 57; Triprangod, 130; Vaikam, 71, 95, 100, 115, 117, 120, 130, 234, 369; Vazhapalli, 117, 252; Vettikkavolu, 57
- Skanda, 7
- Sōma, 119n
- Sōmanātha temple, 265
- Sōmēśvara temple, 91
- śōpāna*, 106, 112, 114-15, 137, 142, 147, 160-61, 164, 172, 174, 181-82, 194-95, 197, 202, 204, 208, 212, 215, 217, 225-26, 229, 231, 235, 238, 243, 256, 260, 264-65, 271, 276
- South Kanara, 62, 117, 142, 191, 197, 259
- spice trade, 2
- square plan, 63, 97-98, 100, 135, 137-39, 143, 148, 150, 154, 172-73, 177, 192, 197, 200, 202, 208, 213, 218, 233-34, 243
- Śrī Ayyappaṇ-kāvu, 131, 162, 222
- Śrī-bali, 31n, 58
- Śrī-Dēvī, 115, 117, 122, 197, 222
- Śrī-Durgā temple, 130
- Śrī-kaṇṭha, 32
- Śrī-Kṛishṇa temple, 130
- Śrī-Kṛishṇasvāmī temple, 130
- Śrī Kumāra, 5, 252
- Śrī Laṅkā, 4, 50, 70-71, 123n
- Śrī-mūlavāsa, 16, 19, 50
- Śrī-Narasiṁha temple, 130
- Sringeri, 89
- Śrīnivāsa, 120
- Śrīparvata, 3n
- Śrī-Rāma, 54
- Śrī-Rāmasumudram, 41
- Śrī Rāma temple, 131
- Srirangam, 71
- Srirangapatna, 40
- Śrī-Raṅganāthasvāmī temple, 71
- Śrī-Thiruvairur Mahādēva temple, 120

INDEX

Śrī-Trikōtēśvara Mahādēva temple, 217
 Śrī Vaishṇavas, 59
 Śrīvaṣarāma, 32
 Śrīvallabha, 18
 Śrīvallabha Kōdaivarman, 27, 35
 Śrīvallavapperuñchalai, 134, 187
 Śrī-vimāna, 58
 Śrī Vira Kōdai-Ravivarman Kiḷapperūr, 213-14
 Śrī Vira Rāma Mārttāṇḍavarman Tiruvaḍi, 258
sthānaka image, 107-108, 113
sthānu-līnga, 22
 Sthānūnāthasvāmī temple, 19, 99, 115, 233
 Sthānu-Ravi, 22-24, 32, 35, 54, 60, 163
 stucco, stucco images, 103-104, 116-18, 137, 195, 199, 224, 248, 254
stūpa, 71
stūpi, 58, 73, 133, 137-38, 163, 182, 190, 193-95, 197, 202-203, 206, 209, 211, 214-15, 217, 225, 228-29, 243, 248, 250, 256, 262, 268
 Subrahmaṇya, 107, 109-10, 119, 121, 195, 202, 237-38, 240, 246, 251
 Subrahmaṇya temple, Karikkad-kshetram, 92, 110, 193, 200, 203; Kidangur, 89, 112, 119, 126, 130; Kumarapuram, 115; Manambur, 117; Maniyur, 92, 110, 121, 130; Panniyur, 163; Parthivasekharapuram, 18, 145; Payyanur, 87, 100, 114, 119, 219, 263-65, 268; Pugalur, 41; Quilon, 238; Tenari, 126, 131; Tiruvallam, 253
 Suchindram, 19-20, 35, 93, 99, 115-16, 121, 187, 233
 Śuddōdana, 19
 Sugata, 51
śuka-nāsā, 58, 101, 156, 161, 179, 192-93, 229, 268
 Sukapuram, 64, 193, 231
 Śukra, 119n
 Sultan's Battery, 54-55
 Sumer, 12
 Sundaramūrti Nāyanār, 21, 59, 122, 152
 Sundararājaperumāl temple, 93
 Sundara Pāṇḍya, 232
 Sundarēśvara temple, 75
sunḍu, 100-101, 112, 207, 211, 229, 246, 251, 258, 260, 276
 Sūrapadma, 7
 Surēśa, 261
suru-maṇḍapa, 152, 276
 Sūrya, 119n
suttu-nāḍi, 98
 Swamikannu Pillai, 26
 synagogue, 38

Syrian Christians, 22-23, 38

T

Tāndaṇ Perum-tiṇai, 17
tāḍi, 195, 277
 Tagaḍūr-eṇḍa Peruñjēral Irumpoṇai, 6-7
 Takkolam, 75, 91, 111
tala, 98, 119, 137, 145, 157-58, 179, 192-93, 203, 219, 243, 256, 276
 Tālagiriśvara temple, 91, 103
 Talaikkattūr, 23
 Talaikkulam, 45n
 Talakkad, 23, 29, 163
 Tali, 24, 26, 30, 59, 64, 75, 84, 100, 113, 160, 220, 224, 246
 Taliparamba, 173, 176, 181, 193, 264
 Tāḷiyādhikāri, 59
 Tamil, Tamil Nadu, 1, 8, 11, 13, 16, 18, 52, 55, 61-62, 77, 79, 83, 85, 89, 92-93, 101, 107-109, 115-16, 120, 132, 135, 148, 191-92, 215, 217-18, 230, 232, 235, 243
 Tanchat Eḷuttachchan, 39
 Tandoni, 49
Tantrasamuchchaya, 5, 63, 73, 75, 81, 92
 Tanur, 130
 Tārā, 51
taraṅga-pōtikā, 144, 179
 Tarisapalli copper-plate, 22-23, 35
 Taurus, 27
 Tavanur, 130
 Telugu-Chōḍas, 69, 91, 133n
 tempera painting, 125
 Tēn-Kailāsanātha temple, 204
 Tenari, 111, 126, 131
 Thanjavur, 22, 29, 77, 89, 91, 93, 123, 149, 187, 217
 Thaliyil Śiva temple, 130
 Thiruvanchikulam, 13, 20-21, 52, 60, 122, 128, 131, 152, 154, 158
 Tillaisthanam, 22
 Tipū Sulṭān, 40, 152
 Tirkakara, 25, 163, 200
 Tirkodittanam, 27, 30, 70, 92, 130, 144, 163
tirthaṅkara, 53, 55
 Tiruchanampundi, 91
 Tiruchchāraṇattumalai, 19, 52, 55
 Tiruchchengannur, 133
 Tiruchchirappalli, 13, 91
 Tiruchchupperur, 204
tiruchchuru-maṇḍapa, 57

Tirukkadittanam, 27
 Tirukkakkarai, 26-28
 Tirukkaṇṇappar, 29
 Tirukkaṇṇapurattudēvar, 176
 Tirukkattuppalli, 91
 Tirukkunavay, 51-53
 Tirukkulasekharapuram, 21, 59-60, 64, 75, 83-84, 89, 92, 191
 Tirumāndhankuṇṇū Bhagavatī temple, 141
 Tirumaṅgai-ālvār, 21n
 Tirumannur, 172n
 Tirumala Nāyaka, 39, 116
 Tirunelveli, 17, 28, 45, 49, 55, 232n, 235, 238
 Tirunillai, 85, 87, 98, 209, 215
 Tirupparangodu, 24
 Tirupparappu, 18
 Tirupattur, 22n
 Tiruppuliyur, 133n
 Tiruppur, 139
 Tiruppuraiyaru, 208
 Tirur, 169-70, 225, 227
 Tiruttaḷiśvara, 22n
 Tiruttani, 107
 Tiruttōṅṇal, 57
 Tiruvadur, 34
 Tiruvaiḍaikkōdu, 18
 Tiruvalangadu, 15
 Tiruvalattur, 85, 114, 261
 Tiruvalla, 21, 22n, 165
 Tiruvallam, 67, 71, 79, 85, 252-53
 Tiruvallavāḷ, 133n
 Tiruvalur, 30
 Tiruvammunḍūr, 25, 133n
 Tiruvanandapuram, Tiruvantapuram, 234
 Tiruvangur, 57
 Tiruvannur, 30-31, 69, 77, 130, 167, 228-29
 Tiruvanvandur, 27
 Tiruvāranvīlai, 133n
 Tiruvāṇṇuvay, 21, 23
 Tiruvattar, 17, 64
 Tiruviḍaimarudur, 235
 Tiruvillamala, 114
 Tiruvēmbilappaṇ, 114, 120, 203, 212
 Tiruvengappuram, 131
 Tiruverumbur, 91
 Tiruvottiyur, 23, 167
 Titiyan, 17
 tōkei, 12n
 Tonḍaimaṇḍalam, 70, 107, 132
 Tonnal Bhagavatī temple, 56-57, 115

tōpi-kal, 14
 tōraṇa, 75, 100, 111, 150, 179, 182, 190, 192, 202, 212, 225, 227, 229, 263, 268, 275
 Tovala, 47
 Travancore, 1, 40, 54, 139, 213-14, 234, 261
 tribhaṅga, 52, 104, 157
 Tribhuvanam, 92, 231
 Trichakrapuram, 131
 Tricchambaram, 32-33, 64, 77, 119, 129, 176
 Trichur, 13, 21, 23-24, 26, 39, 45, 53-54, 56, 59-60, 75, 79, 84, 87, 92, 95, 98, 100, 105, 108, 111, 114, 119-20, 131, 158, 160, 163, 192, 194, 200-201, 203-204, 206, 208-209, 212, 219, 222-23, 233
 Trikkadiri, 131
 Trikkandiyur, 69, 77, 114, 167, 170, 220, 227, 229
 Trikkangod, 57, 131, 200
 Trikkayikkat temple, 130
 Trikkodithanam, 35
 Trikkōtēśvara temple, 79, 92, 95, 227
 Trikur, 43, 47
 Trilochana Pallava, 3n
 tripattā-kumuda, 53, 75, 276
 Tripangod, 24, 67, 77, 87, 130, 169, 172, 220, 225, 228-29
 Tripayar, 56, 79, 98, 101, 108, 112, 119, 131, 195, 200-201, 203, 206, 208-209, 220, 224
 Tripunittura, 24-25, 154
 Tripura-saṁhāra, 6
 Triruchchaperur, 204
 tritala-vimāna, 73, 137, 192, 252, 268
 Trivandrum, 10, 17-19, 35, 43, 56, 61-62, 67, 71, 77, 79, 85, 95, 107-108, 110-12, 115, 117-20, 122, 131, 133-34, 139, 141, 143, 215, 225, 234, 252-53, 258
 Trivikramangalam, 111-12, 114
 Tulā (Libra), 27, 30, 243
 tulasi, 7
 Tuḷu, Tuḷu-nāḍu, 1, 3n, 8, 14, 52, 54-55, 61, 65, 67, 69, 103, 116-17, 129, 139, 141, 148, 199, 219
 Tiruvarangad, 43
 Tyndis, 10, 14

U

Udaiyavara, 61, 116-17, 142
 udarabandha, 105, 107-10, 156
 Udayagiri, 41
 Udayamperur, 57, 92, 200, 213
 Udayanapuram, 100, 115, 119, 130, 244, 271

INDEX

Udayavaṇmar, 34
 Uddyōtana-Sūri, 20, 134
 Udipi, 61, 142
 Udiyañjēral, 7, 16
 Udiyaperūr, 213
 Ukkiramangalam, 24, 160, 300
 Uliyannur, 98
 Ullal, 61, 65, 105, 191, 199
 Umaiyaḍ dynasty, 22
 Umaiyaṇḍār cave, 45
 Umā-mahēśvara, 115, 120, 122, 127-28
 Uṇṇaikaḷattiram, 56
upagrīvā, 107-10
upāna, 53, 75, 77, 135, 137-38, 141, 143, 147, 150, 152-54, 156-58, 161-62, 165-66, 168-69, 172, 174-75, 177, 179, 181-82, 188, 190-95, 197, 199, 201-202, 204, 206-209, 211, 213-15, 217-18, 222, 224, 226-29, 235-36, 238, 240, 242-44, 246, 248-50, 253-54, 256, 258-61, 263, 265-66, 269-71, 276
upapīṭha, 77, 150, 153-54, 157, 169-70, 172, 204, 218, 225, 227-28, 231, 236, 238, 244, 246, 260-61, 276
upavīta, 105-10, 156, 196
ūrdhva-padma, 218, 251
ūru-dāma, 110
utsava-mūrti, 235, 242
 Uttamaditya, 69
uttara, 58, 73, 143, 153, 166, 172, 179, 190, 193, 195, 199, 204, 217, 225, 248, 276
 Uttamerur, 91

V

Vaḍakkunnātha temple, 56, 79, 95, 98, 101, 105, 108, 112, 119, 125, 131, 194, 200-201, 203-204, 206-209, 218, 227
vādil-māḍam, 213
vāhana, 104, 119
 Vaidumbas, 133n
 Vaidyanāthasvāmī temple, 129
 Vaikam, 71, 95, 99-100, 115, 117, 128, 130, 220, 244, 269, 271
 Vaikuṇṭhanātha, 117, 197
 Vaikuṇṭha-perumāḷ temple, 93
 Vaikunthapuram, 131
 Vaishṇava, Vaishṇavism, 21, 25, 40, 49, 65, 107, 110, 120-21, 133, 181, 227, 230, 248
 Vaisūrimālā, 60
vajra-paryāṅka, 53, 55

vājana, 179, 190, 193-95, 199, 217, 225, 276
vajra, 238
 Vaḷabha, 32-33, 51, 167, 177, 179
valabhi, 73, 119, 135, 143-44, 150, 153, 157, 161, 166, 172, 179, 182, 190, 193, 199, 201-202, 204, 207, 211, 214, 217, 222, 225-28, 240, 243-44, 251, 254, 256, 260-62, 270, 276
 Vāḷappalli, 21-22
 Valaya-Udayadichchapuram, 67, 252, 255
valayas, 105, 110
vaḷiambalam, 99, 120, 264
 Valiasalai, 79, 92, 115-16, 134, 138, 187
 Vaḷḷuvanāḍu, 148, 167
 Vāmana temple, 69, 87, 92, 115, 220, 222
 Vāmana-Mahāvishṇu temple, 200
 Vanchiyoor, 131
 Vāñchuḷēśa, 152
vaniyar, 23
 Vañji, 8, 13, 50
varada-mudrā, 47, 106-108, 110-11, 121, 196, 238
 Varaguṇa, 19
 Varāhamihira, 8
 Varāhamūrti, 163
 Vārāhi, 197
 Varkkalla, 58, 77, 99, 115-16
 Varuṇa, 119n
 Vasco da Gama, 37
vastra-haraṇa, 251
Vāstu-śāstra, 3, 5, 58, 79, 85, 218, 269
 Vāsudēva, 157
 Vāsudēvaṇ, 65
 Vāsudēvapuram, 130
 Vāsukī, 120
 Vaṭadāge, 4, 50, 71
 Vāṭṭeḷuttu inscription, 24, 52-54, 59, 147, 157-58, 173, 181, 195, 197, 211, 217, 220, 242
 Vaychchaṇ Pōndi, 25
 Vāyu, 119
 Vazhapalli, 117
 Vedas, Vedic, 9, 111, 134, 136, 168
 Vēdavyāsa shrine, 253
vēdi, *vēdikā*, 135, 137, 143, 147, 150, 156, 161, 165, 177, 181-82, 190, 192-95, 199, 201-202, 204, 206-209, 211, 213-14, 217-18, 222, 225, 227, 229, 236, 240, 244, 248, 250, 254, 256, 258-60, 262, 265, 269, 270, 276
 Velayudampalaiyam, 41
 Vellanaḍ temple, 111
 Vellur, 220
 Velvikudi, 21

- Vembanāḍu, 157
vēṇ, 33n
Vēṇāḍu, Vēṇāḍu kings, 3, 23, 25-31, 34-37, 39, 58, 186-87, 231-34, 255
Vēṇāṭṭaḍigal, 214
Venganellur, 114, 120, 203, 212
Veṅgala-nāḍu, 13
Venoor, 55
Vēṇugōpāla, 116, 128, 222
Vēśara, 85
Vettikkavala, 57
Vidisha, 71, 231
vidyādhara, 52, 115
vihāra, 50, 123n
Vijayalayachōḷīśvara temple, 67
Vijayanagara, 36, 39, 54, 113, 116, 119, 129, 232-33, 235-38, 249, 258
Vijayapura, 134
Vijayarāghavadēva, 23
Vikki Aṇṇaṇ, 22
Vikrama Chōḷa, 187
Vikramāditya Chōḷa-Mahārājul, 69
Vikramāditya Varaguṇa, 17, 19-20, 52
Vikramarāma, 33, 51
vilakkumāḍam, 99, 259
Vilinjā, 3, 17, 43, 47, 60-61, 64, 106, 109, 134, 139, 141
Villavaṇ, 29
vimāna, 19, 64, 98, 143, 166, 169, 191, 194, 213, 248, 250, 263, 277; *-bhitti*, 156; *-dēvatās*, 113; *-kōshṭhas*, 102
Vinādhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti, 47
vira-kaṇṭha, 195
Vira-Kēraḷa, 28-29
Vira-Kēraḷavarmaṇ, 255
Vira-Kōṭa, 20
Vira-Pāṇḍya, 232
Vira-rākshasa, 256
Vira Ravi Ravivarmaṇ, 233
Vīrabhadra, Vīrabhadra temple, 65, 104-105, 116, 142
Viṇalamiṇḍa Nāyanār, 21
Virarājēndra, 30
virāsana, 111
Virasikhamani, 45
Virasōḷamaṇḍalam, 13
Virattānēśvara temple, 107
Virupāksha temple, 64n
Vishṇu, 7, 15, 18-19, 32, 45, 47, 49, 60, 64, 97, 101, 104, 107-10, 113, 115, 117-18, 120-22, 127, 135, 138, 141, 145, 147, 150, 158, 162, 173-74, 191, 196-97, 199, 215, 217, 222, 227, 240, 243, 246, 249, 251
Vishṇu temple, Aanantapuram, 197-99; Aranmula, 129; Atiyannur, 110; Chengannur, 249-51; Eramam, 173-74; Kanniparamba, 248; Kazhakuttam, 144; Kizhavellur, 220-22; Munjira, 139; Nedumpura, 224; Nemam, 215-17; Panjal, 223; Panniyur, 161-62; Perumpaladur, 57, 145-47; Perunnayil 92; Podiyal, 243-44; Punalur, 218; Puthannangadi, 58; Ramantali, 181-82; Tirukkulasekharapuram, 154-57; Tirumittakkod, 113; Tirunillai, 209; Tiruvattar, 64, 95, 99, 115; Triakara, 163; Tricchambaram, 32; Trivandrum 131, 133, 141
vishṇu-kānta, 161, 277
Vishṇumāyā, 121
Viśvanātha shrine, 242
votive *stūpas*, 93
vṛisha, 4n, 277
Vṛishṇi-kula, 19
vṛitta, 4n, 70, 277
vṛitta-kumuda, 53, 138, 141, 150, 156-58, 161-62, 165, 168, 179, 181, 190-95, 199, 206, 208-209, 211-14, 218, 222, 224, 227-29, 240, 243-44, 248-50, 261, 263, 265-66, 269, 277
vṛitta-prāsāda, 252
vṛitta-sphuṭita, 156-57, 161, 193, 277
vṛittāyata, 73, 277
vyāla, *vyāla-mālā*, 138, 179, 263, 277

W

wall-paintings, 125
Warangal, 89
Western Ghats, 10, 12, 14
wood carvings, 6, 15, 39, 99, 113, 117-18, 120, 125, 129, 145, 199, 213, 231, 240, 251
Wynad, 28

Y

Yādavas, 18
yakshi, 52, 259, 261
Yama, 119n
yajñōpavīta, 121
Yaṅṅun, 43
Yerrangudipad, 91
yōgāsana, 109, 112, 117
yōgi, 109

Z

Zamorin, 3, 37-38, 232, 246, 248-49
zodaical sign, 24



Kaviyur: rock-cut cave, relief of a chieftain. See p. 45

PLATE II

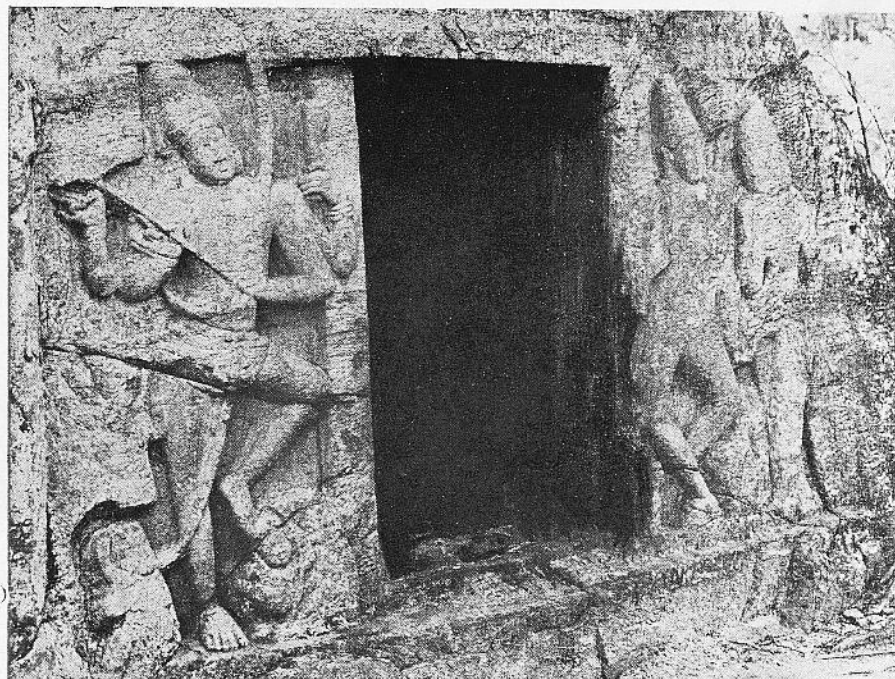


A



B

Kaviyur: rock-cut cave, A, dvāra-pāla, and B, ṛishi. See p. 45

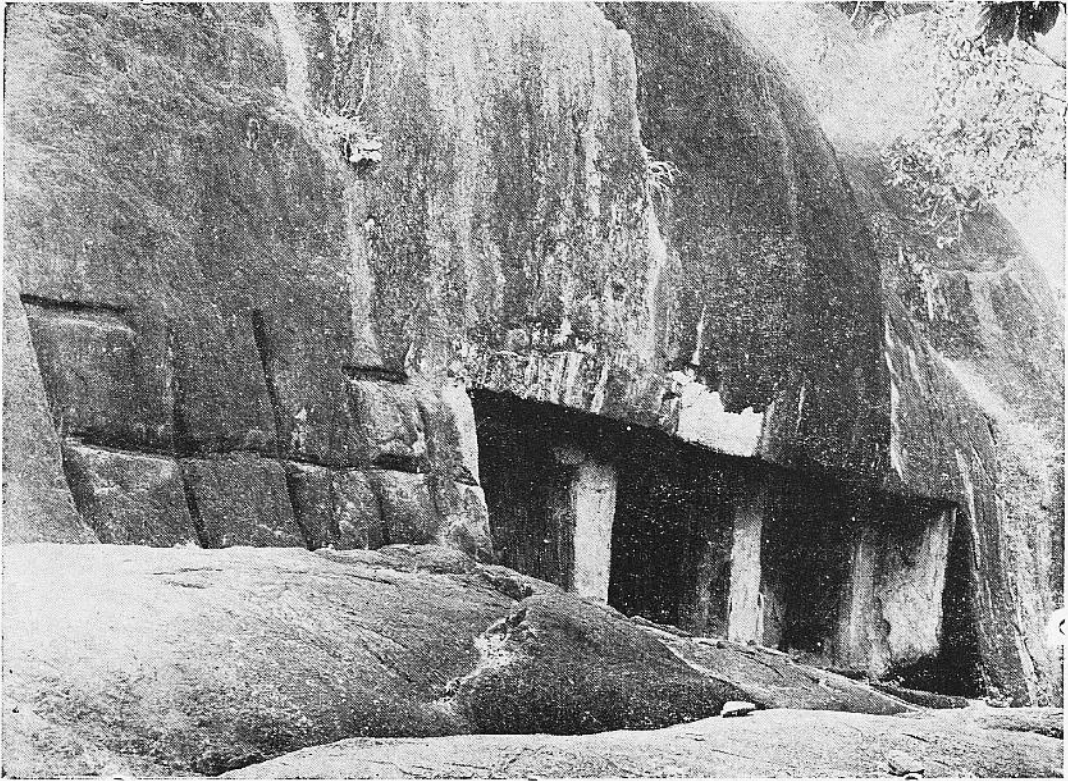


A



B

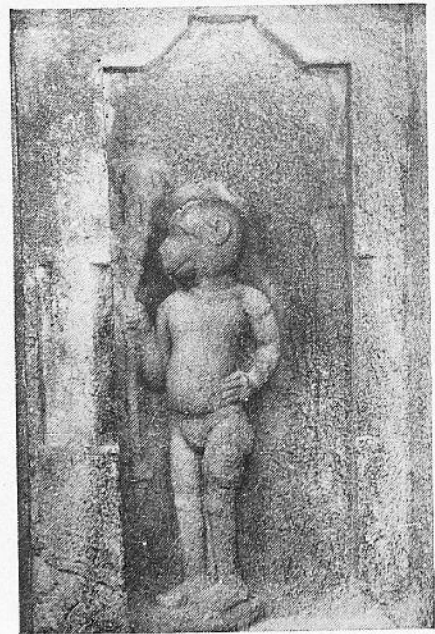
A, Viliñjam: rock-cut cave, reliefs on façade; B, Kottukal: rock-cut cave, general view. See p. 47



A



B



C

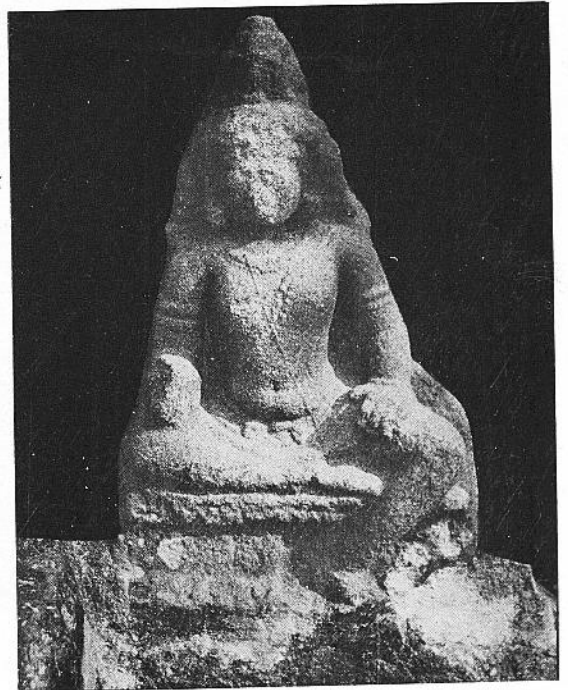
A, *Bhrantanpara*: unfinished cave, general view; B, *Irunilancode*: rock-cut cave, relief of *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*; and C, *Kottukal*: rock-cut cave, relief of *Hanumān*. See pp. 47 and 49



A



B

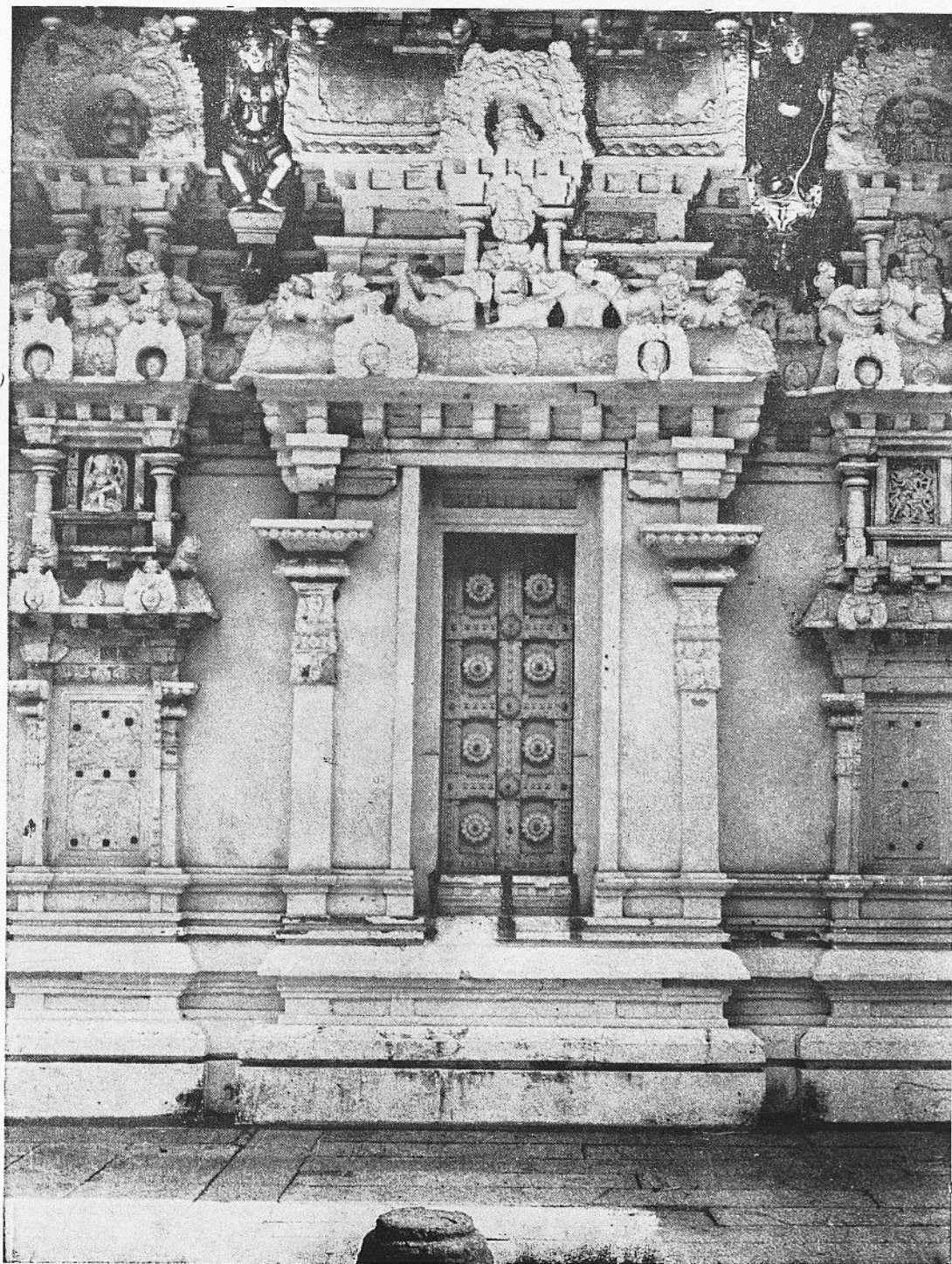


C

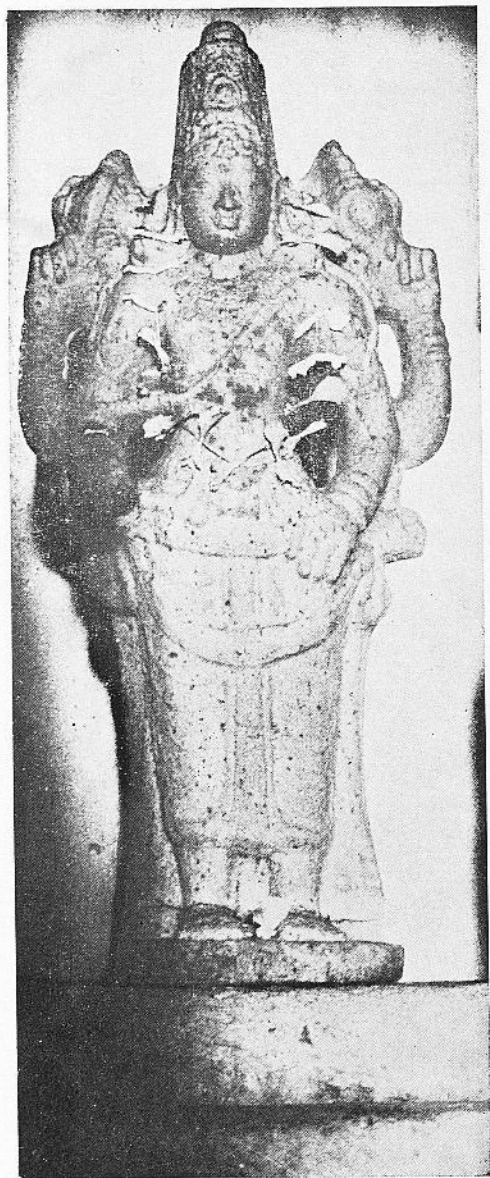
A, *Viliñjam: Bhagavati temple*; B, *image of Mātrikā* and C, *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. See pp. 60, 106 and 141-43



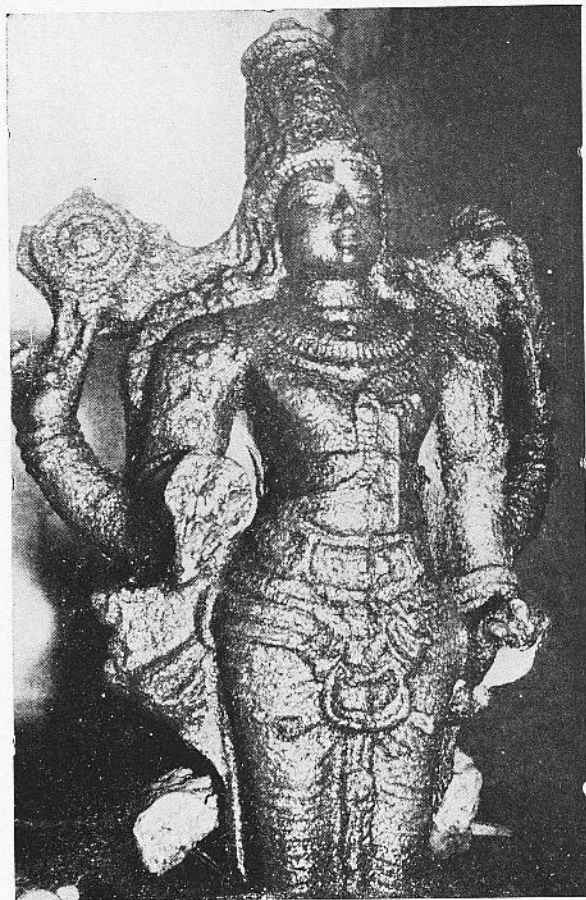
Kazhakuttam: Mahādēva temple. See pp. 143-45



Kazhakuttam: Mahādēva temple, details of adhishthāna and wall. See pp. 143-45



A

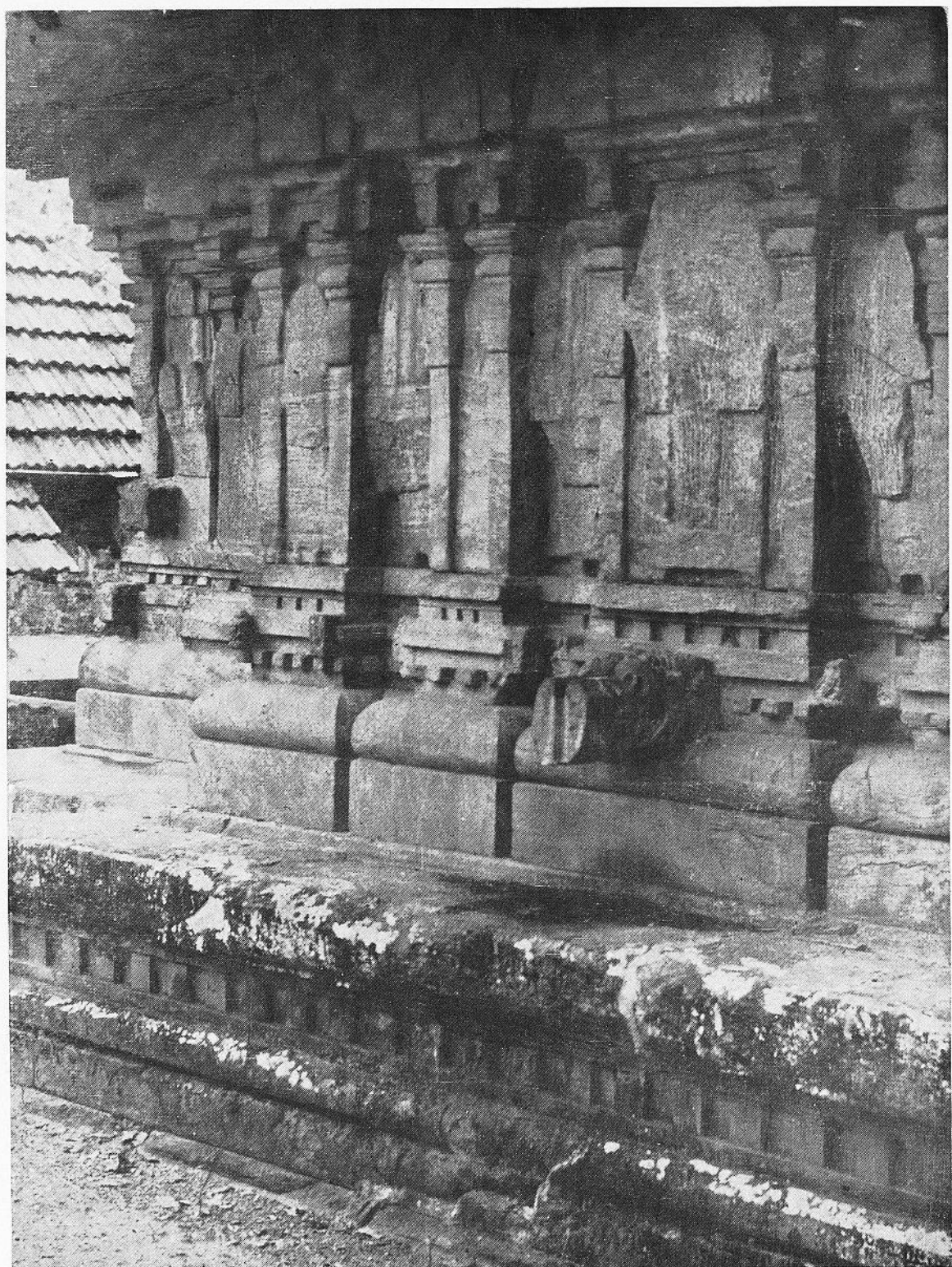


B

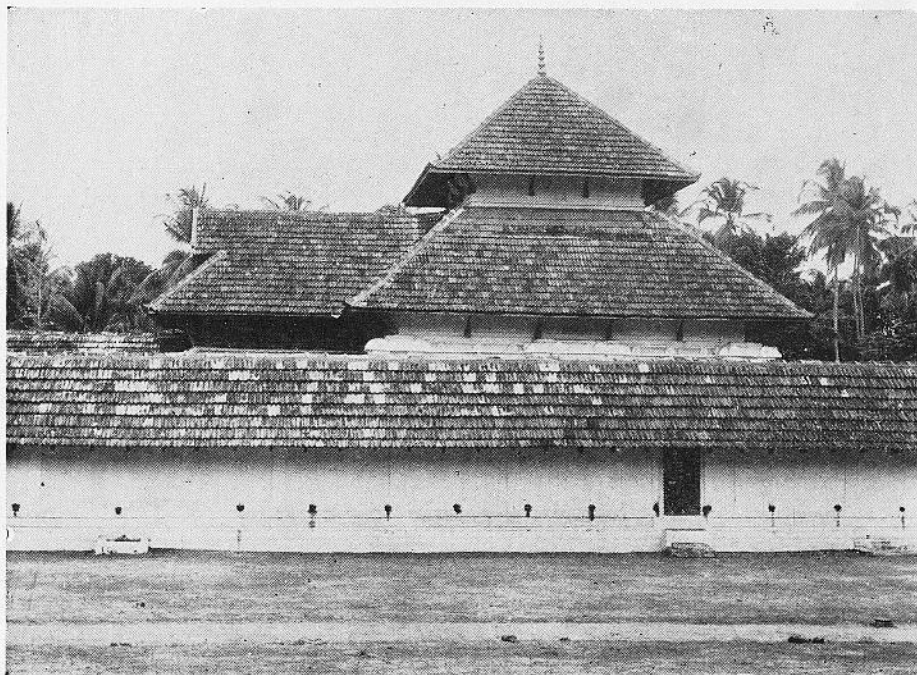
A, Kazhakuttam: Mahādēva temple, image of Vishṇu in a sub-shrine; and B, Atiyannur: Viṣṇu temple, image of Viṣṇu. See pp. 60, 107, 110 and 145



Viliṅga: Śiva temple. See pp. 139-40



Netirimangalam: Siva temple, close view of unfinished wall. See pp. 149-50

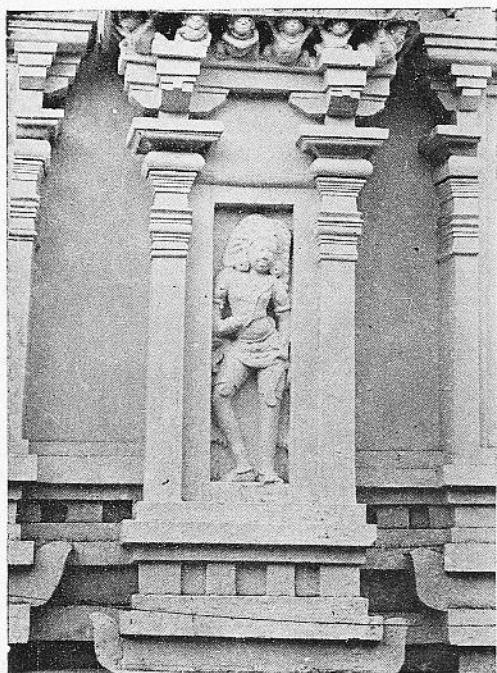


A

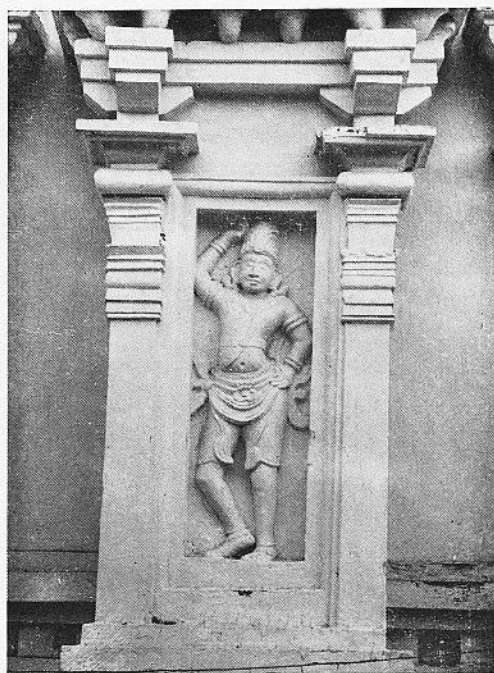


B

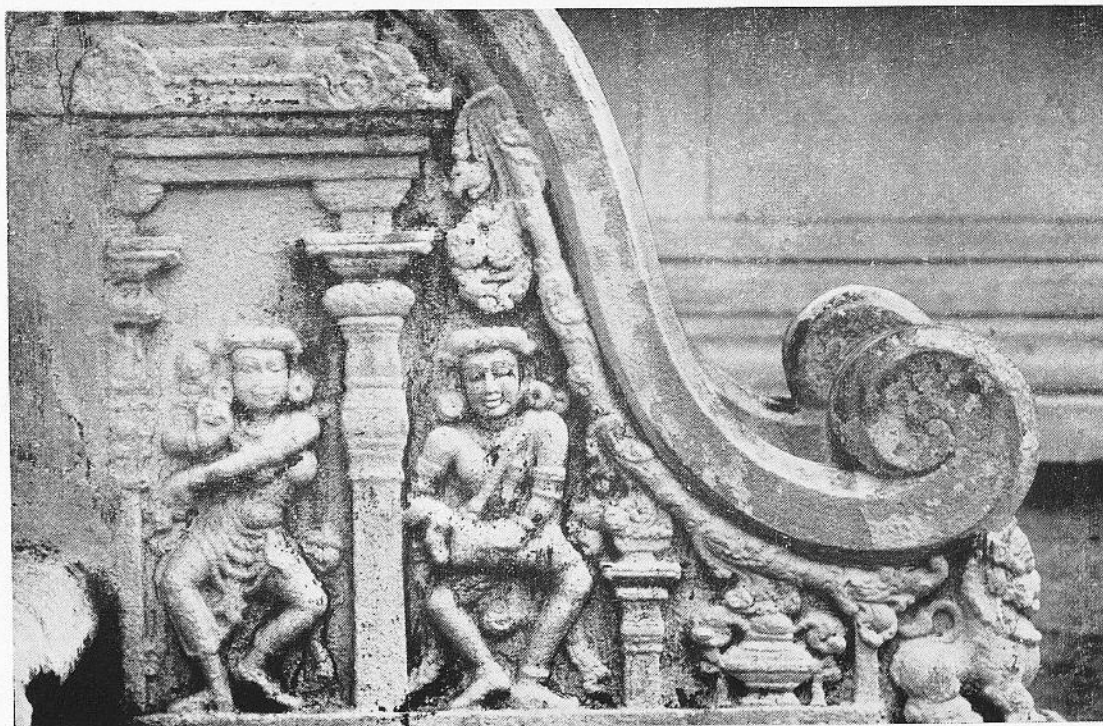
Tirukkulasekharapuram: A, Kṛishṇa temple; and B, subsidiary Gōvardhana shrine. See pp. 154-58



A



B

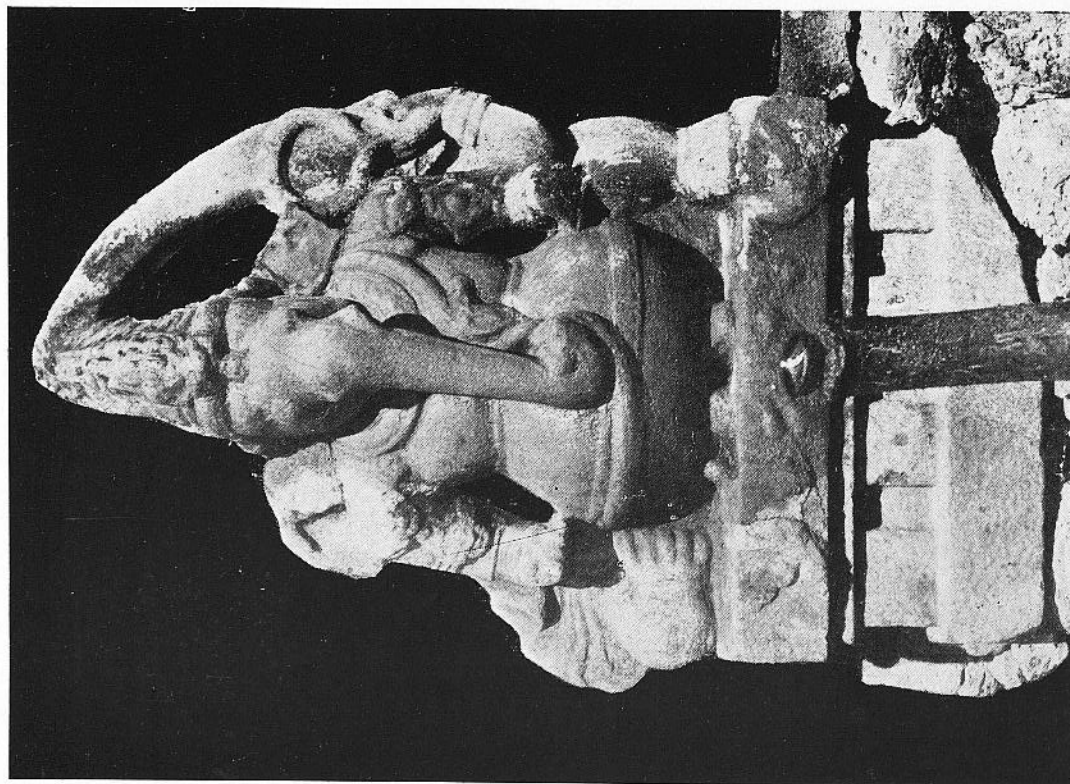


C

Tirukkulasekharapuram: Kṛiṣṇa temple, A and B, image in dēva-kōshṭha, and C, dance-scene on banister of Gōvardhana shrine. See pp. 154-58



Tirukkulasekharapuram: Kṛṣṇa temple, close view of adhishṭhāna and wall. See pp. 154-58



A



B

A, Thiruvanchikulam: Kāṭataḷi Śiva temple, image of Gaṇapati; and B, Kaur: Kāṇṇēśvara temple, image of Gaṇapati. See pp. 60, 105 and 109



C

B

A

Trichur Museum: images from Kijatali Siva temple, A, *Dakshināmurti*; B, *Brāhmi*; and C, one of the *Mairikas*. See pp. 60, 104-105 and 158



A



B

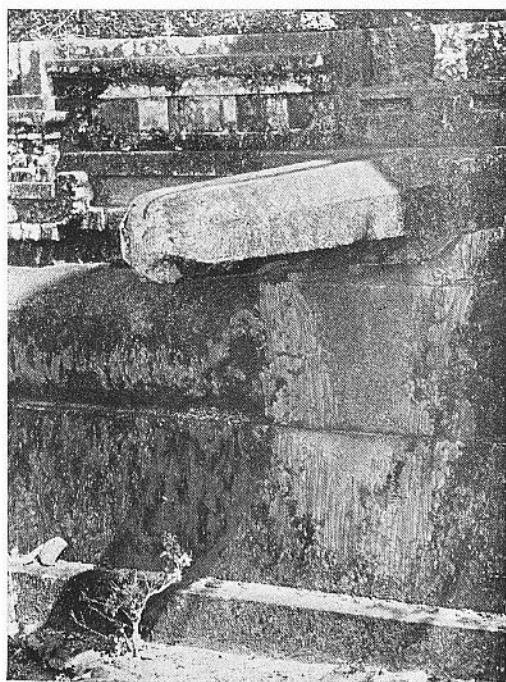


C

Thiruvanchikulam: Kīḷataḷi Śiva temple, A, general view, B, an image of Mātṛikā, and C, details of prajāla, See pp. 60, 104-105 and 158-60



A

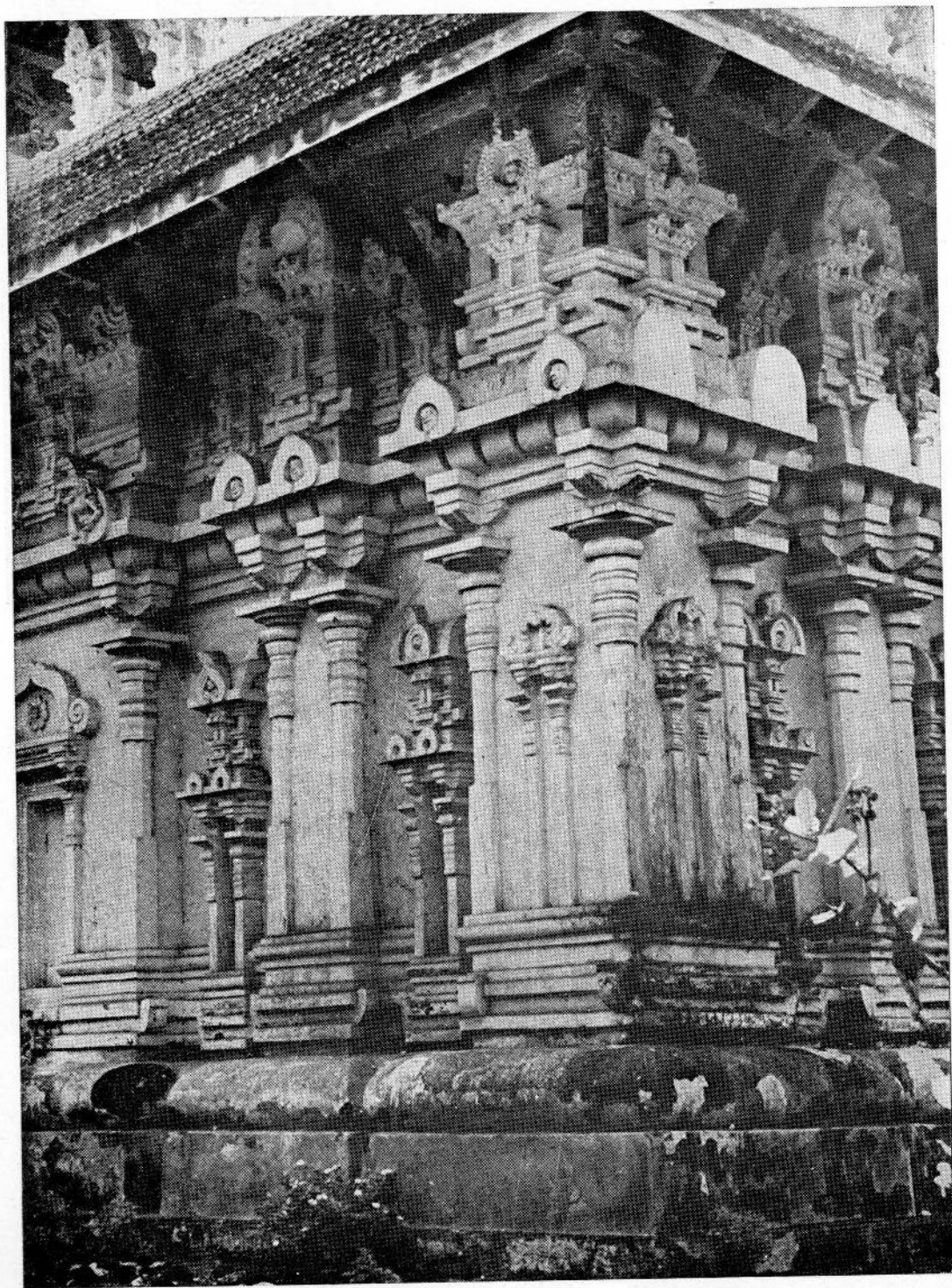


B

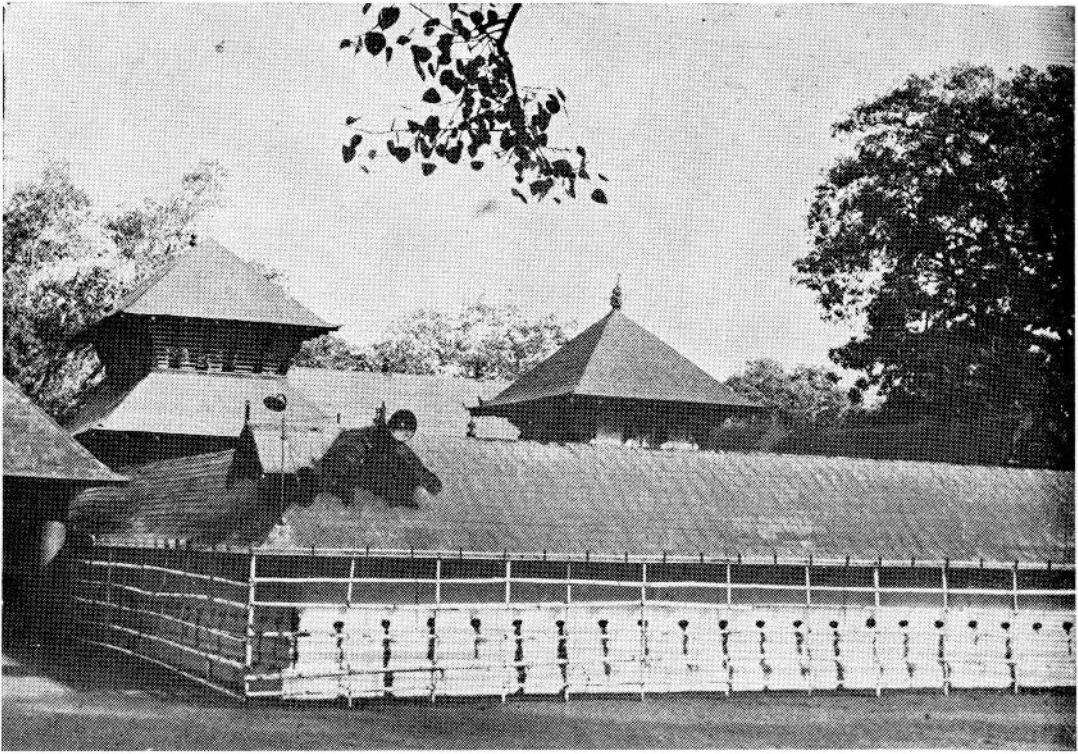


C

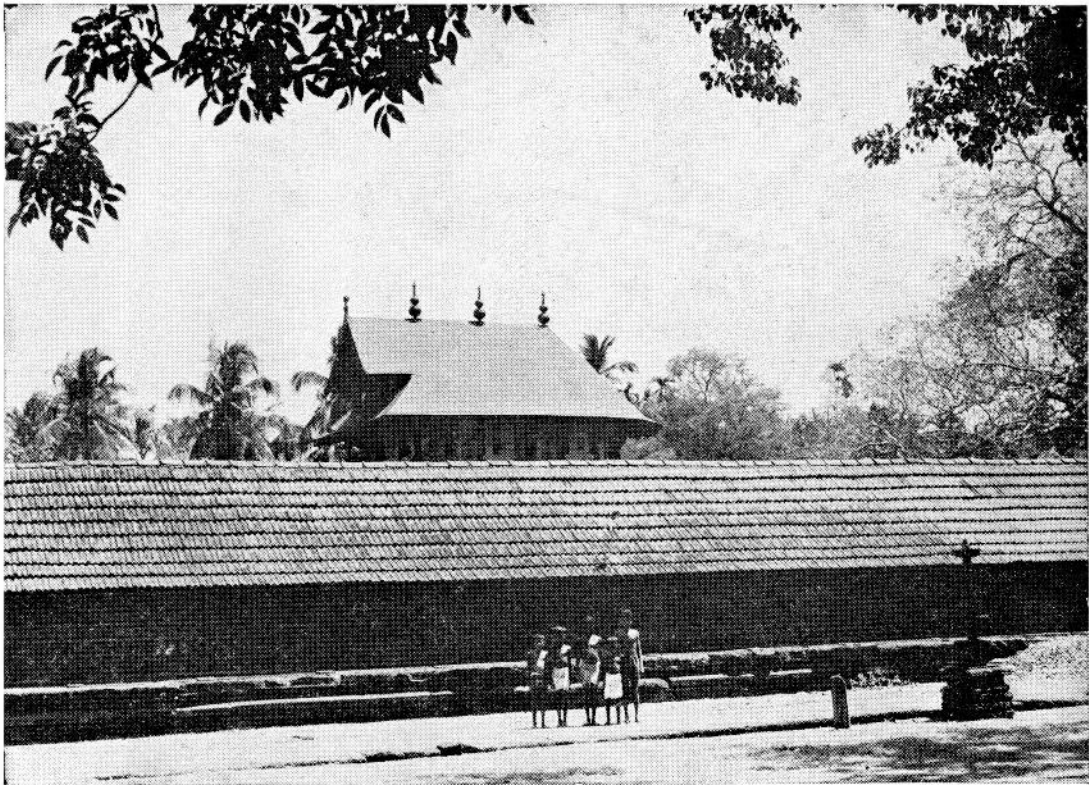
A, Tali: Śiva temple, B, Panniyur: Lakshminārāyaṇa temple, close view of prāṇāla and adhishṭhāna; and C, ruined garbha-griha. See pp. 160-63



Tali: Siva temple, close view of bhith. See p. 160

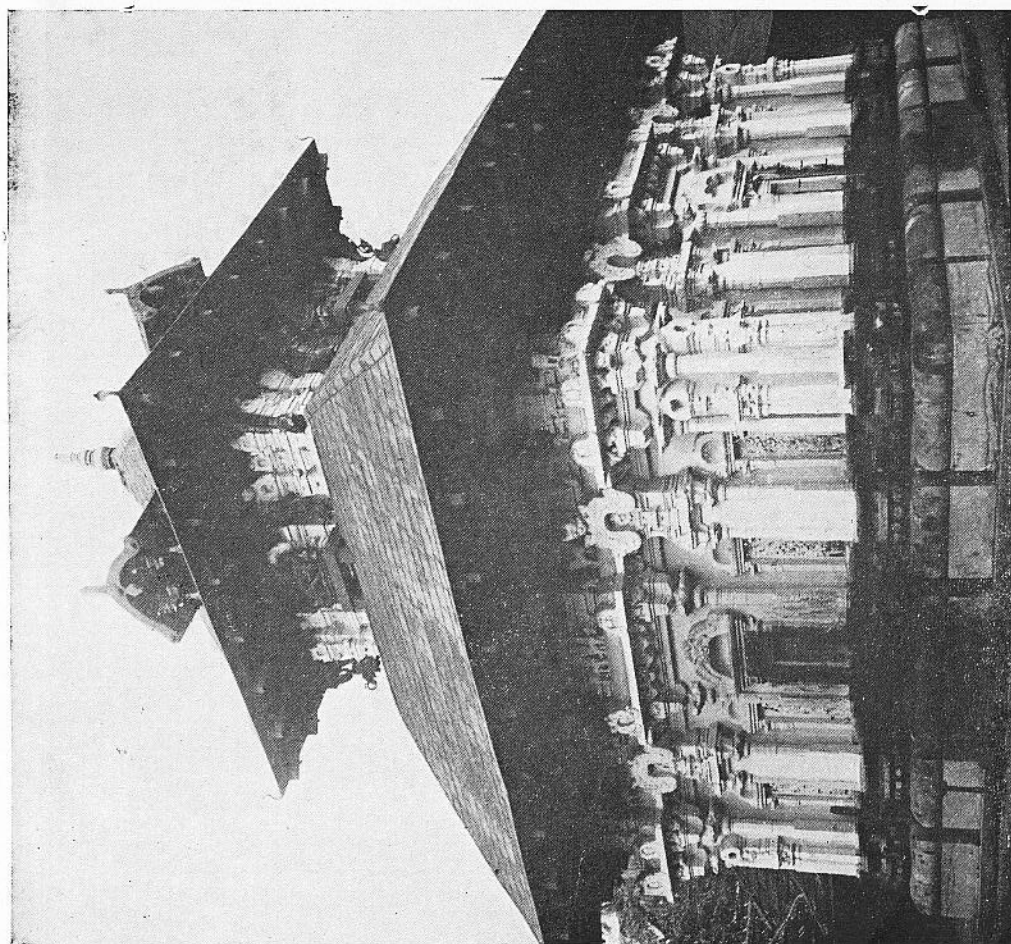


A

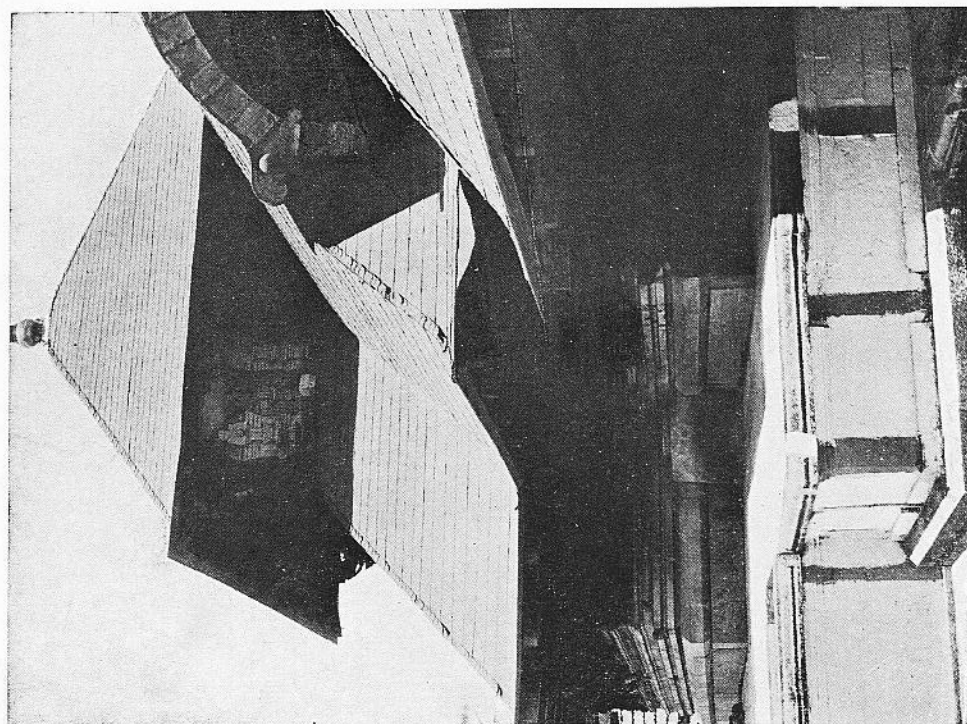


B

A, Kodungalur: Bhagavati temple; and B, Triprangod: Kālasamhāramūrti temple.
See pp. 153, 169 and 225-26

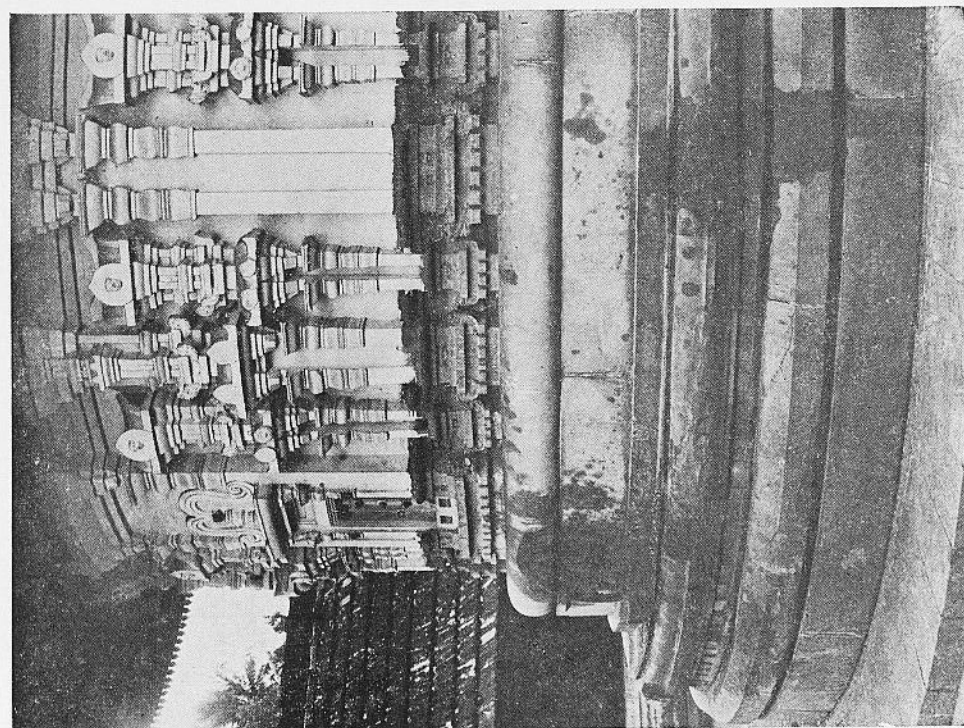


A

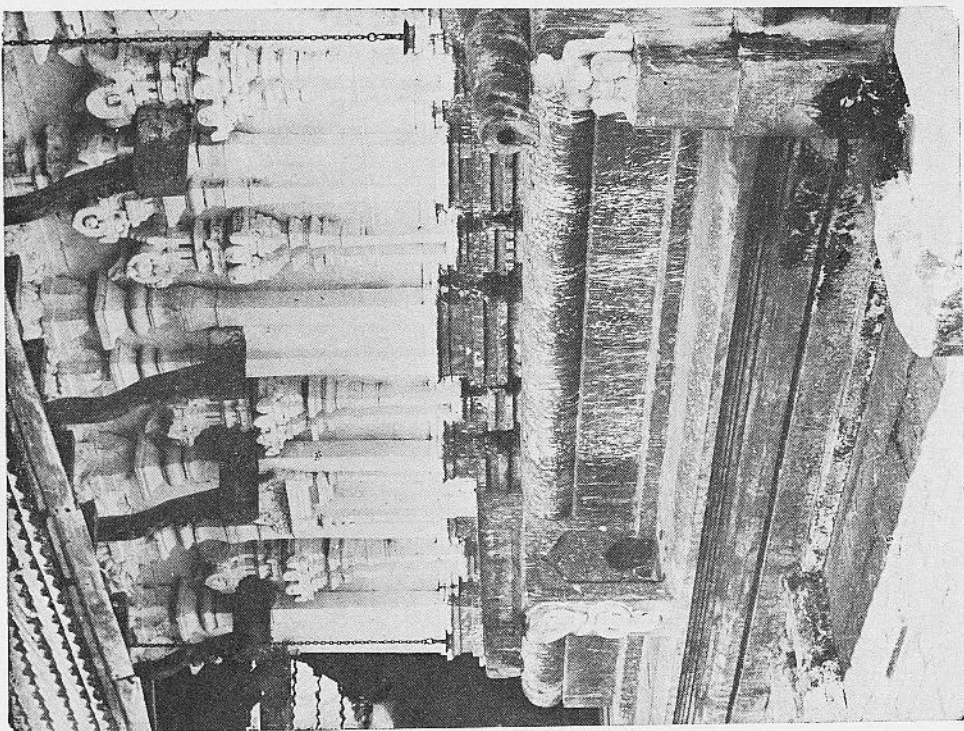


B

A, Thiruvanchikulam: Śiva temple; and B, Kandiur: Śiva temple. See pp. 151-53



A

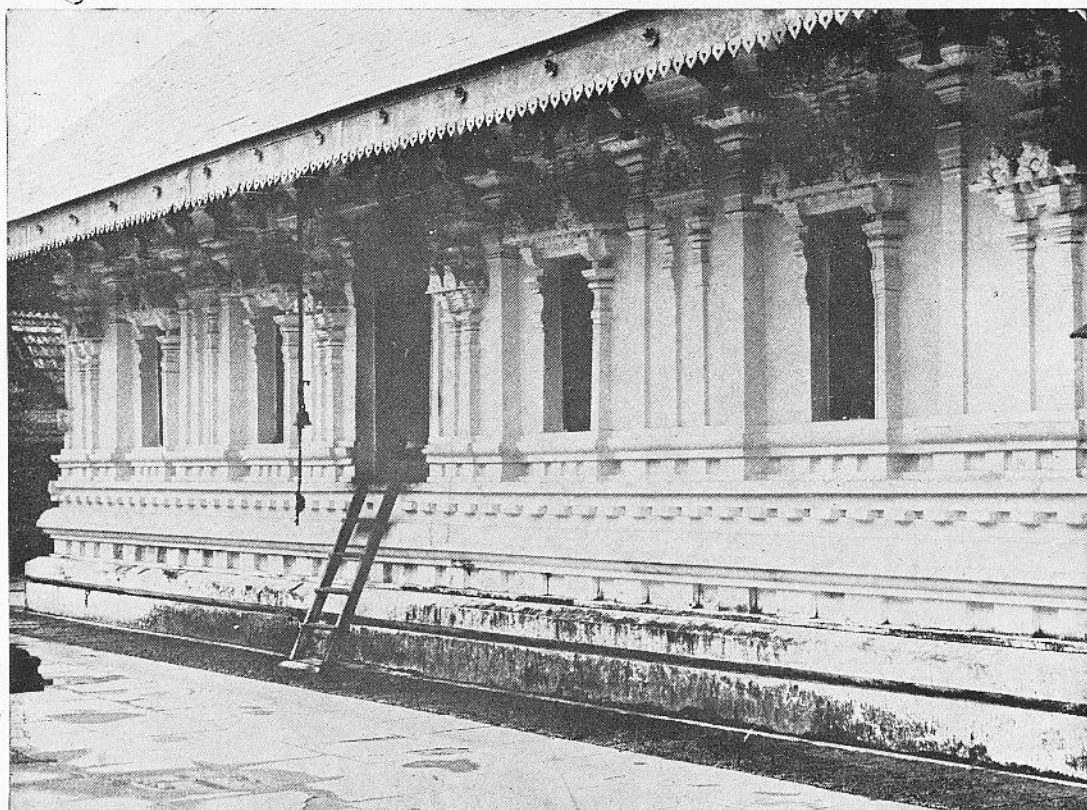


B

A, Tiruvannur: Śiva temple, close view of *adhishṭhāna* and wall, and B, Trikkandiyur: Śiva temple, close view of *adhishṭhāna* and wall.
See pp. 170-72 and 227-28



A

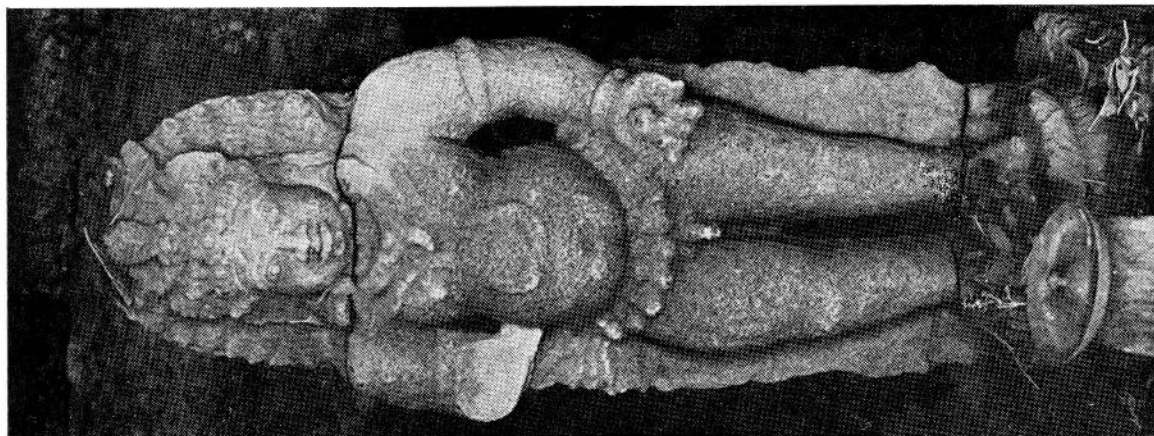


B

A, Ramantali: *Nārāyaṇkaṇṇūr* temple; and B, Tricchambaram: *Rājarājeśvara* temple, view of wall and *adhishṭhāna*. See pp. 176-77 and 180-82

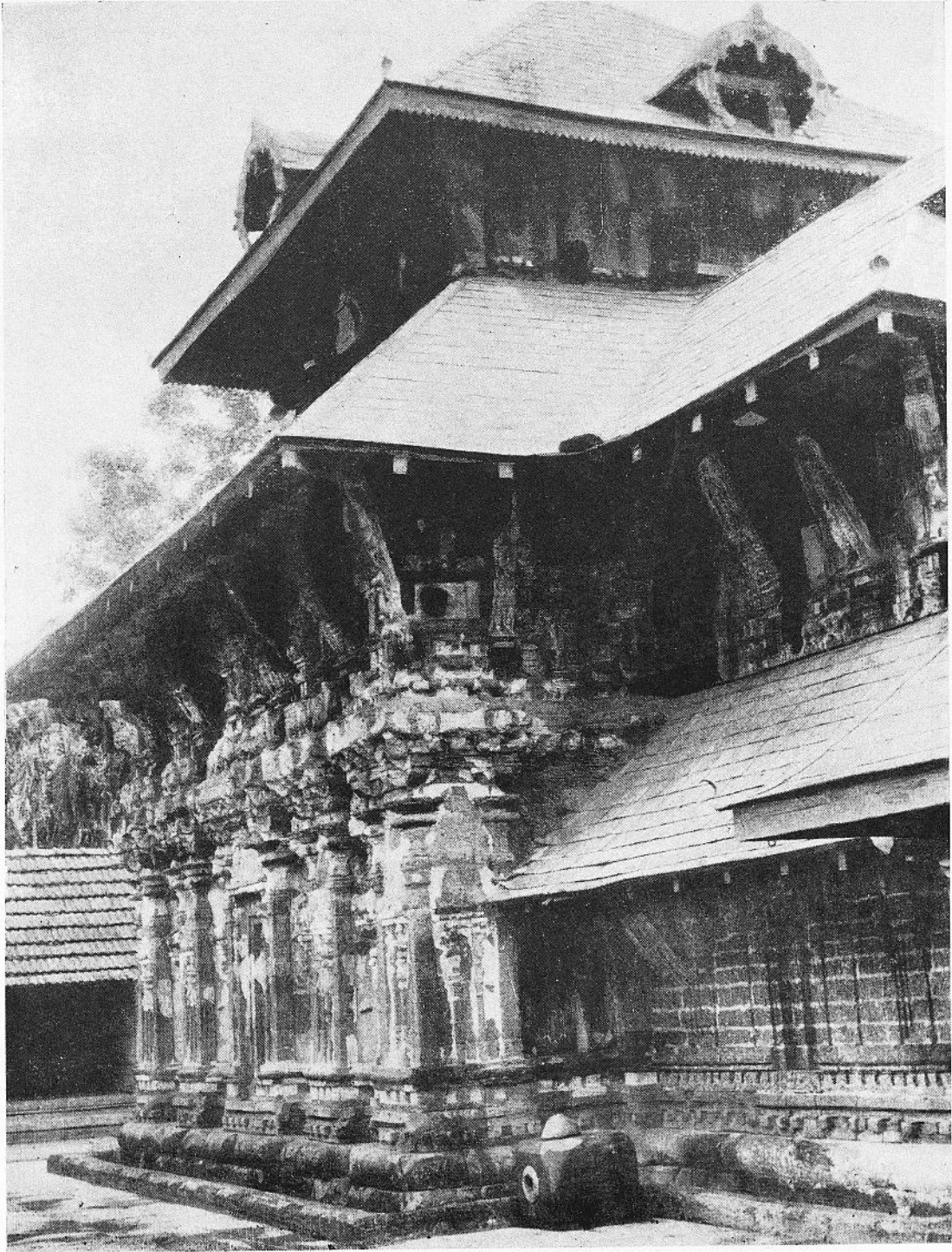


Ramantali: Nārāyaṇakṣṇūr temple, A, image of Śāstā, and B, Bālakṛishṇa. See pp. 60, 108-10 and 181





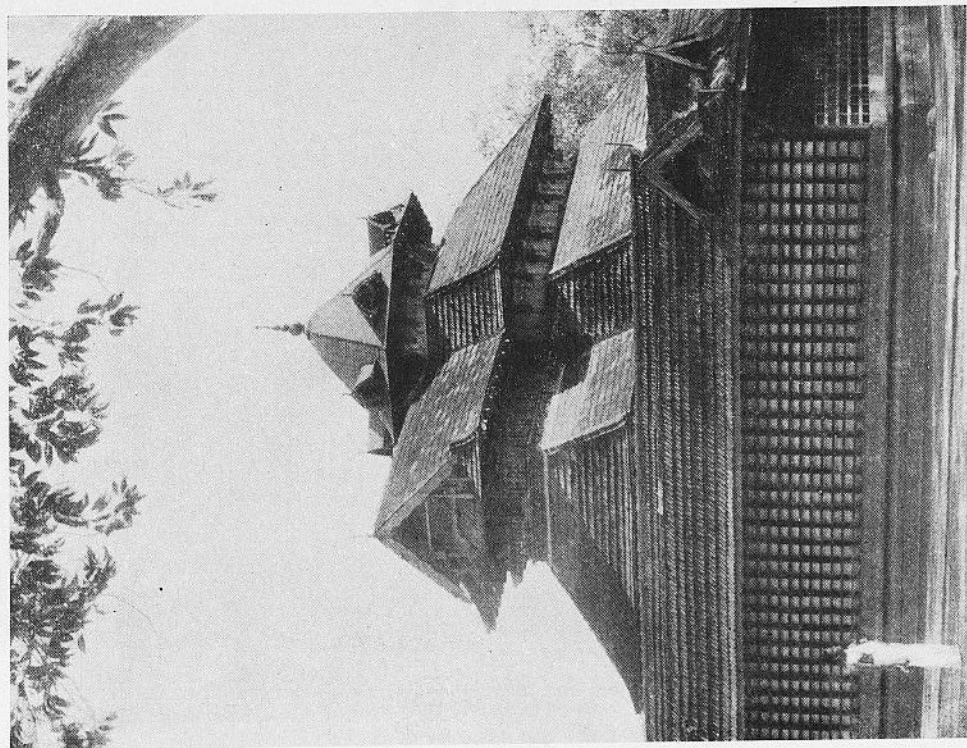
Eramam: Chālappurattu ambalam, image of Vishṇu. See pp. 107 and 173



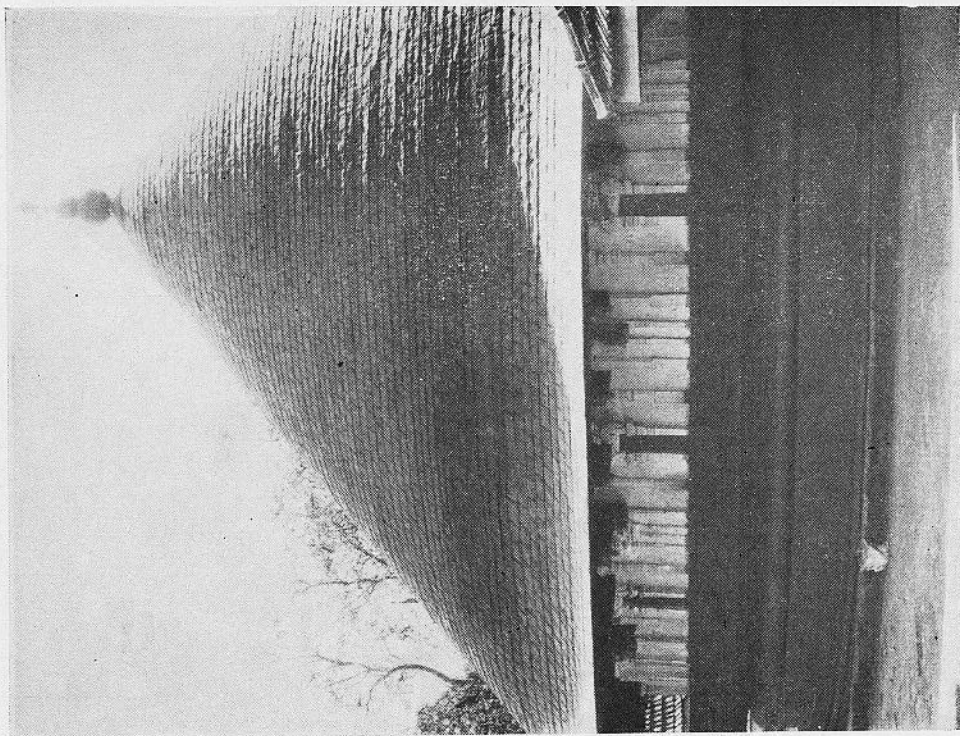
Tricchambaram: Kṛṣṇa temple. See pp. 177-78



Chalapuram: Kaṭṭilmādam. See pp. 189-90



A

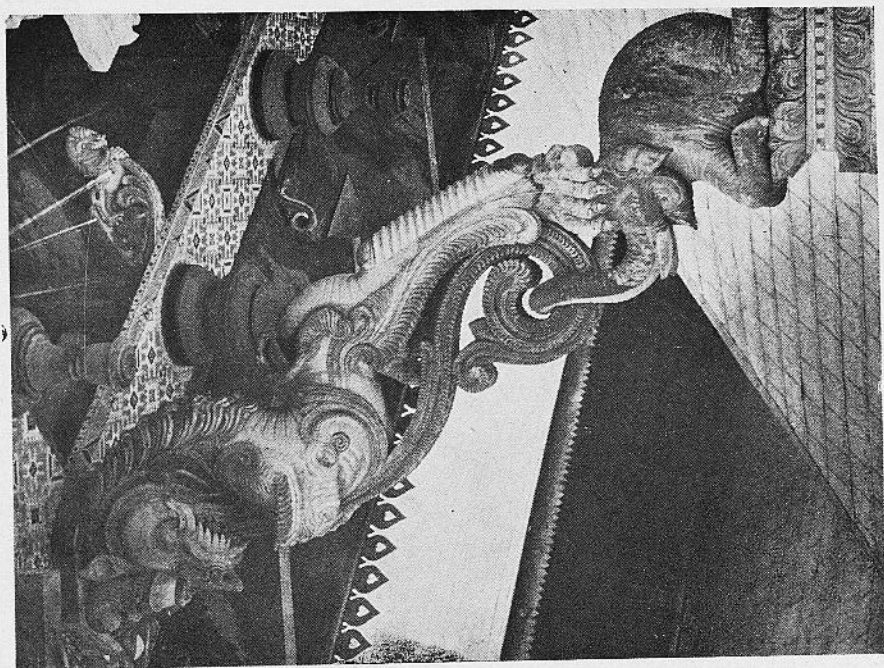


B

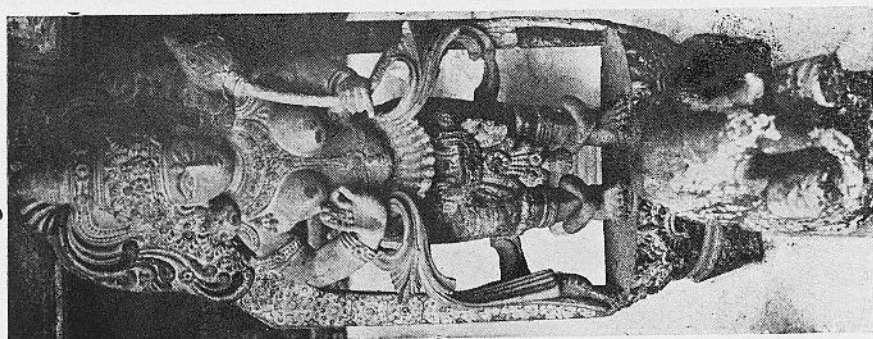
Peruwanam: Śiva temple, A, Māṭattilappan, and B, Iraṭṭayappan, shrines. See pp. 192 and 208-209



Peruvanam: Śiva temple, close view of wall and adhishṭhāna of Mādattilappan shrine. See p. 192



C

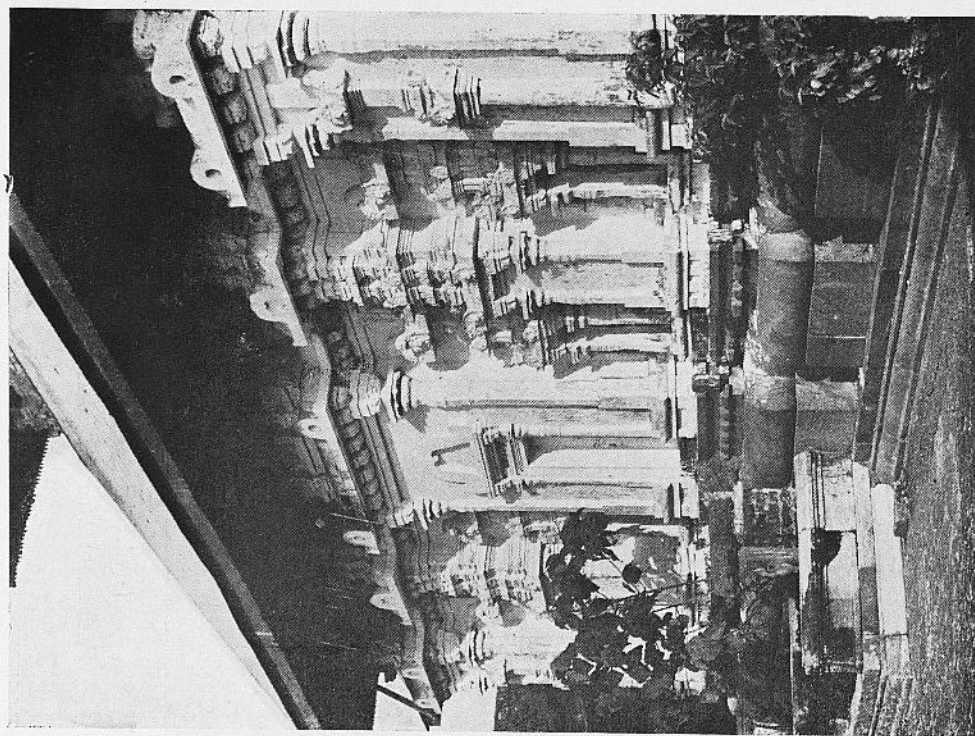


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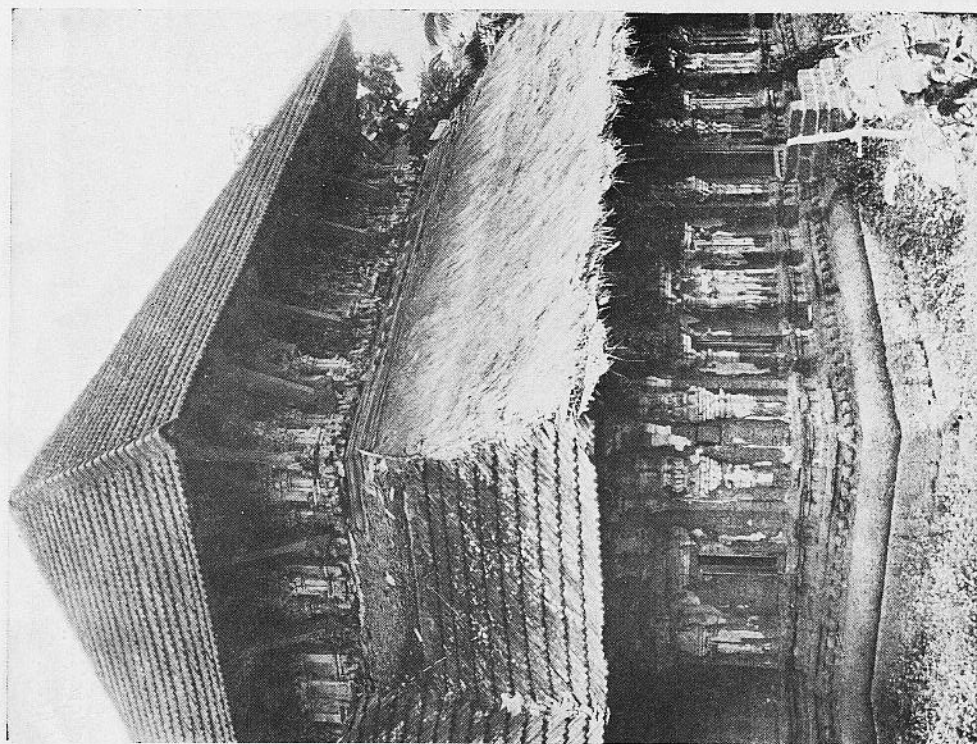


A

Peruvanam: Siva temple, A, dvāra-pāla, B, wooden bracket figure of Irattayappan shrine; and C, Tricchanbaram: Rajarājēśvara temple, gaja-vyāla as wooden bracket figure. See pp. 118-19

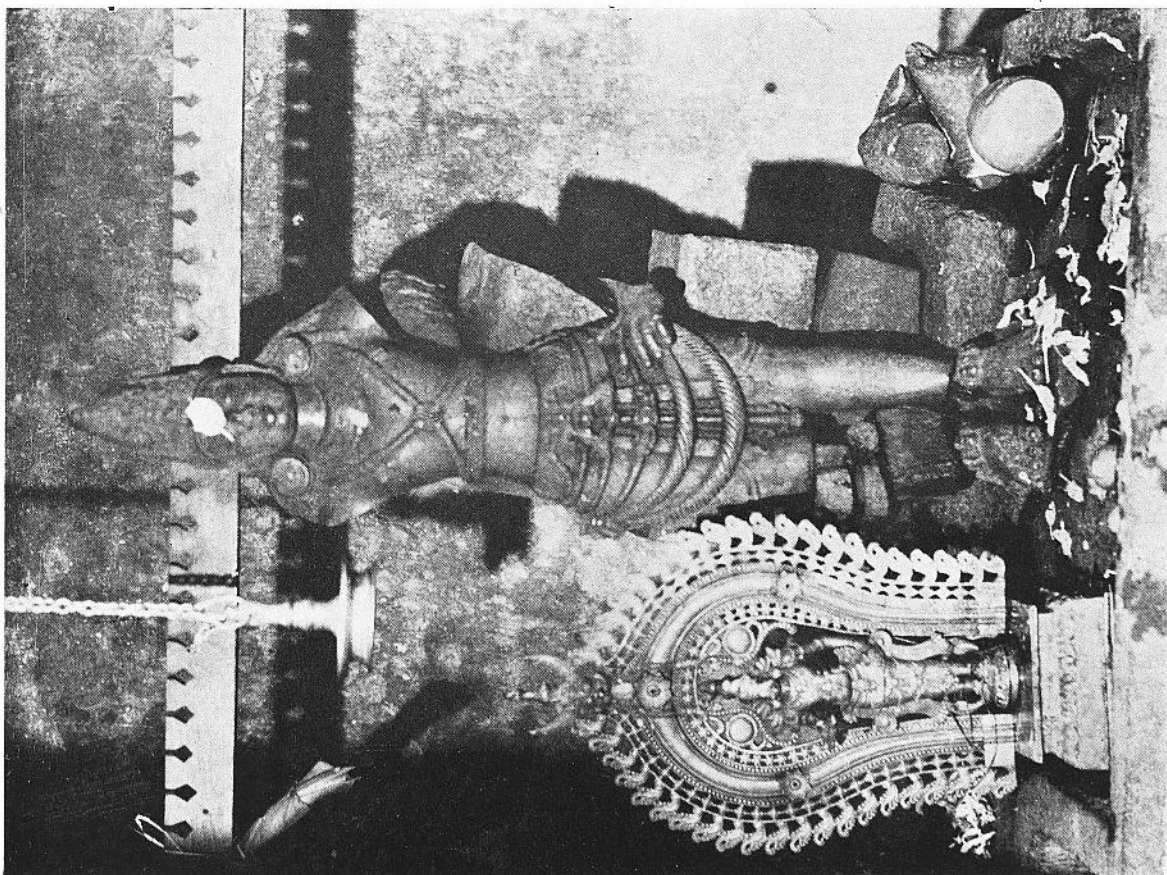


A



B

A, *Edappā: Sūkṣmānāṁrī temple*, and B, *Maniyūr: Subrahmaṇya temple*. See pp. 193-94

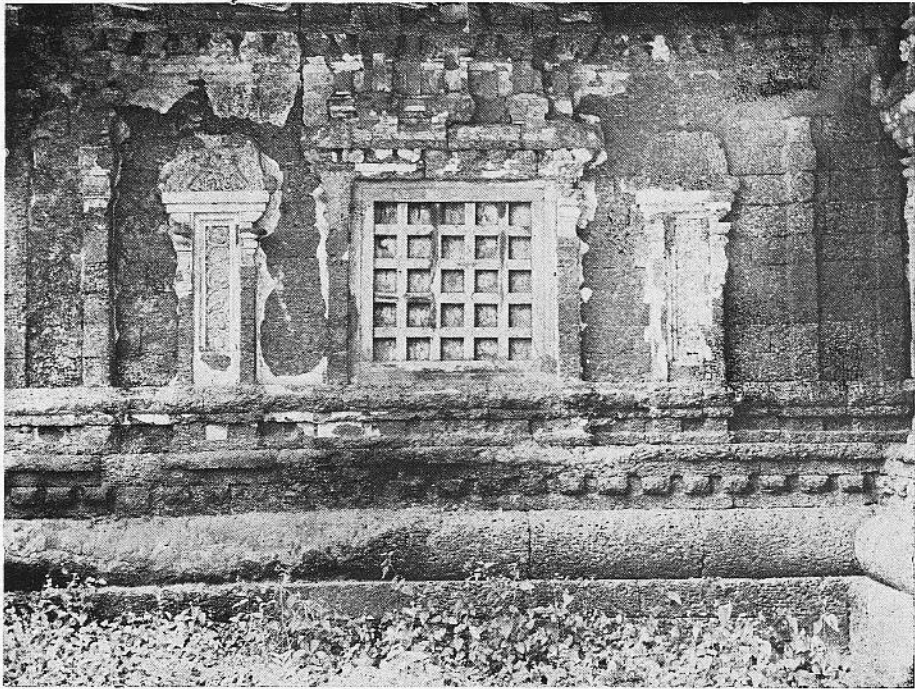


A

Mañiyur: Subrahmanya temple, A, Subrahmanya, stone and metal image, and B, Śāstā. See pp. 110-11 and 193



B

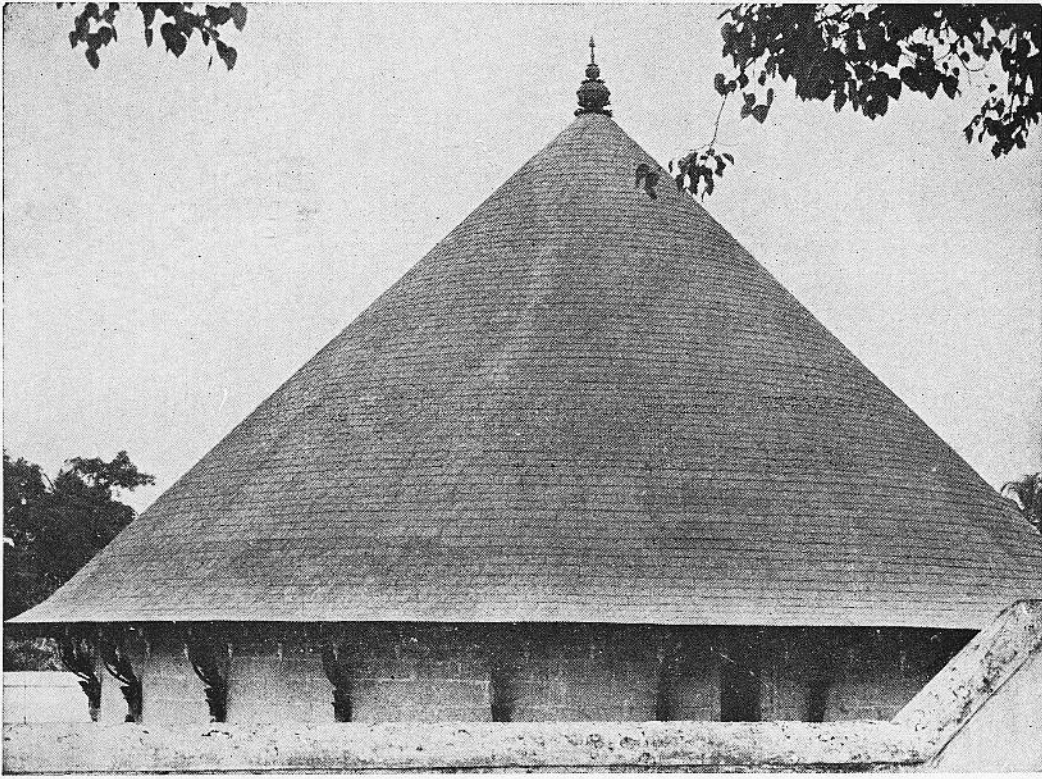


A



B

A, Maniyur: Subrahmanya temple, *adhishthāna* and wall; and B, Pullur: Kōḍavalam Viṣṇu temple.
See pp. 193-96



A



B

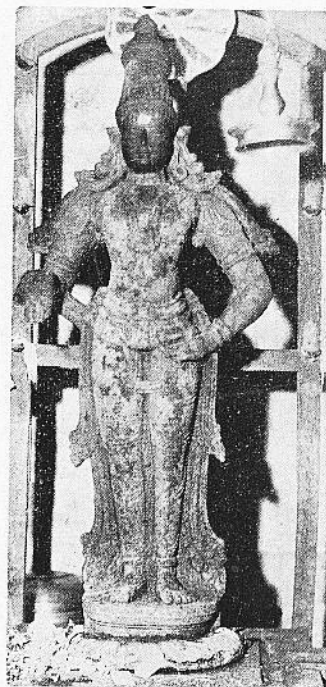
A, *Tirkakara: Vāmana-Mahāviṣṇu temple*; and B, *Anantapuram: Anantapadmanābha temple*. See pp. 197-98 and 200



A

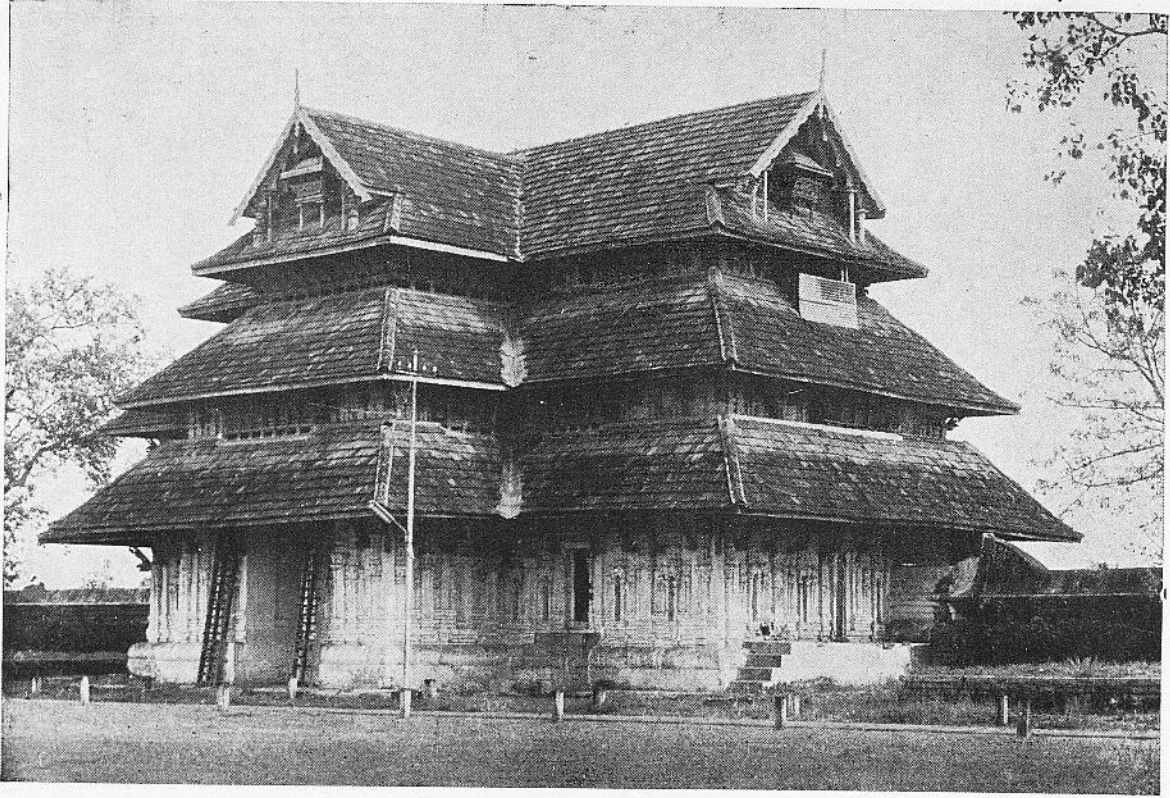


B

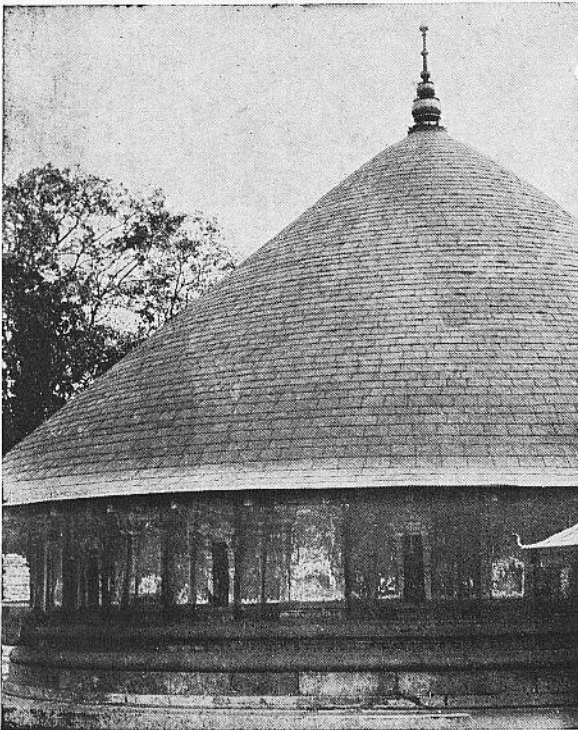


C

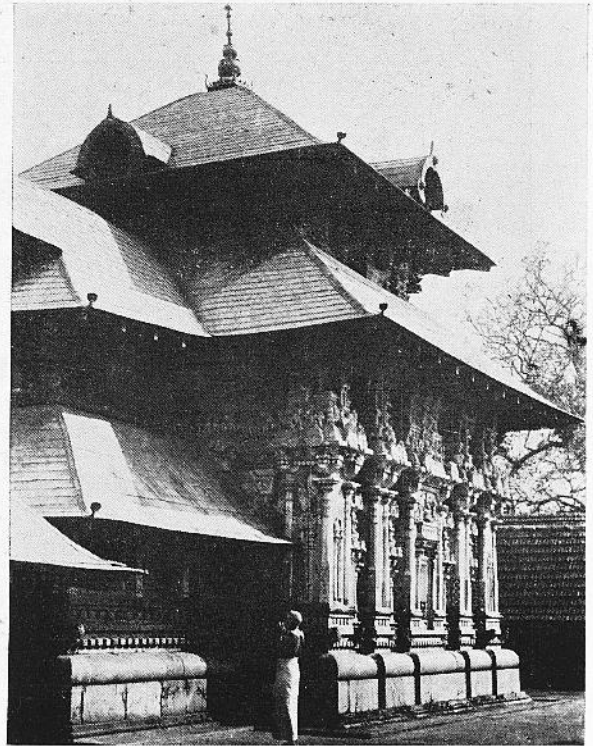
Anantapuram: Anantapadmanābha temple, A, murals on sanctum wall, B, stucco figure of Vishnu; and C, Vellanad: Subrahmanya temple, image of Subrahmanya. See pp. 110, 117 and 197-99



A

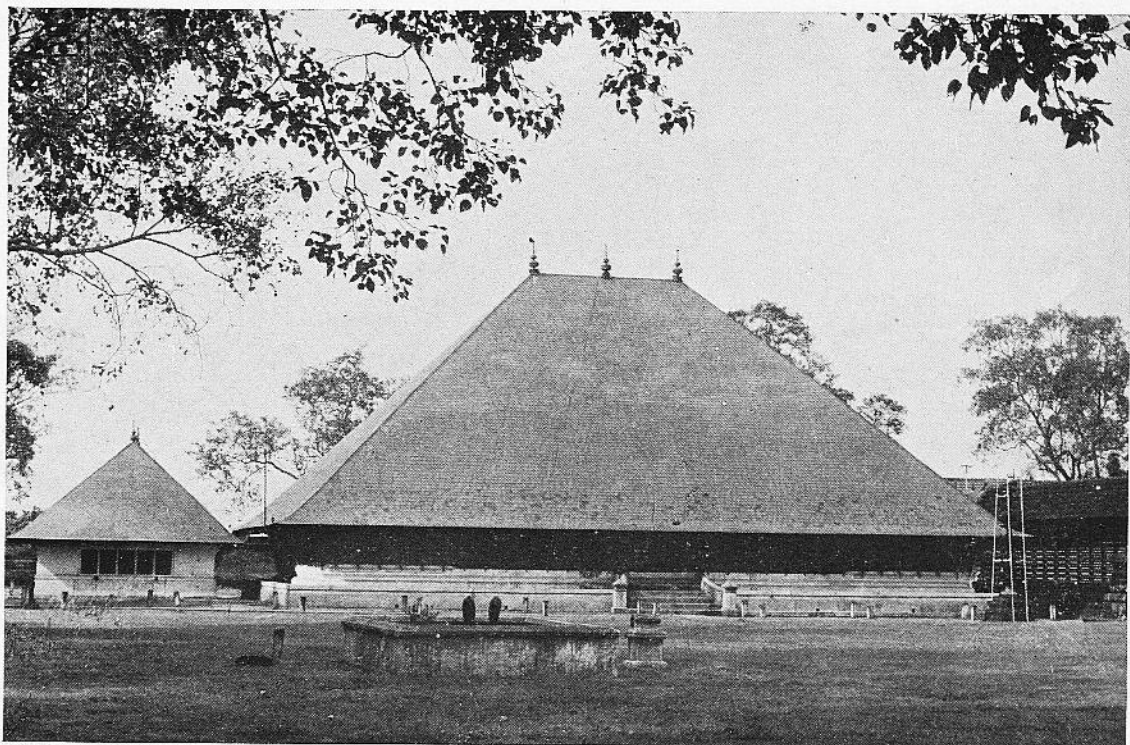


B



C

Trichur: Vaḍakkunnātha temple-complex, A, gōpura, B, shrines of Vaḍakkunnātha, and C, Rāma. See pp. 204-206

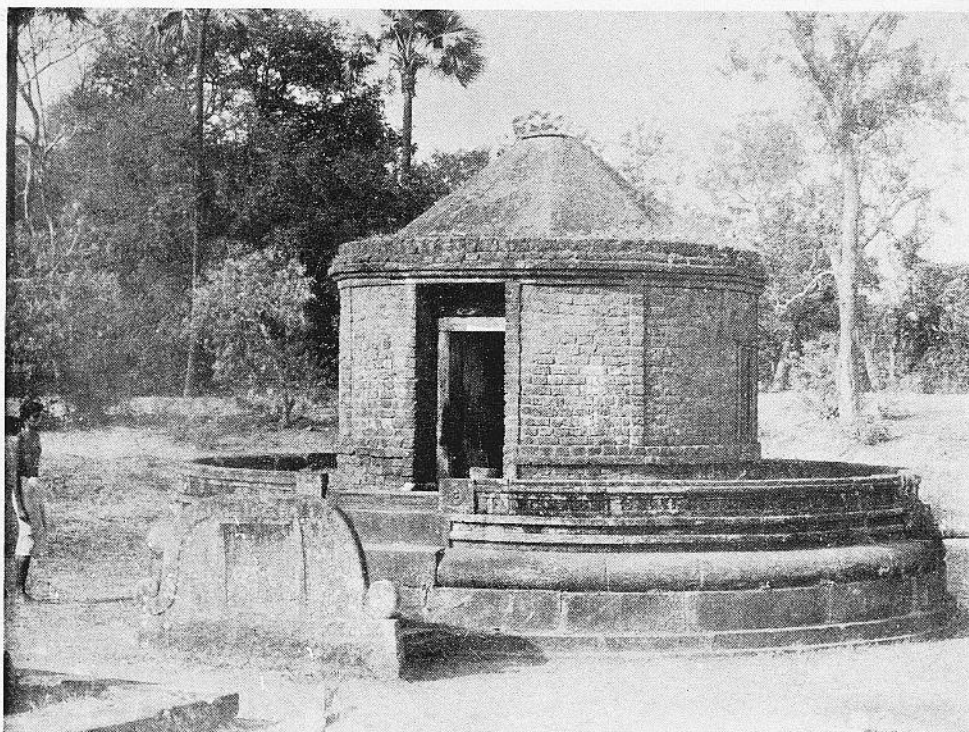


A

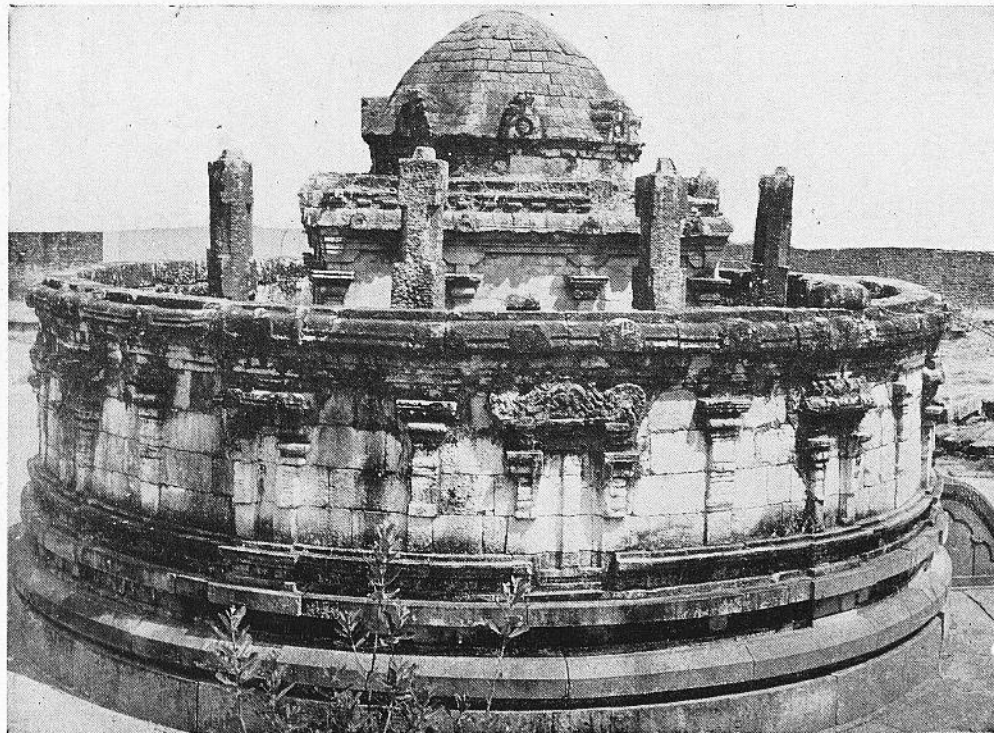


B

Trichur: Vaḍakkunnātha temple, A, kūttambalam, B, murals in vaḷiambalam depicting Vaikuṇṭhanātha and his consorts. See pp. 124 and 205

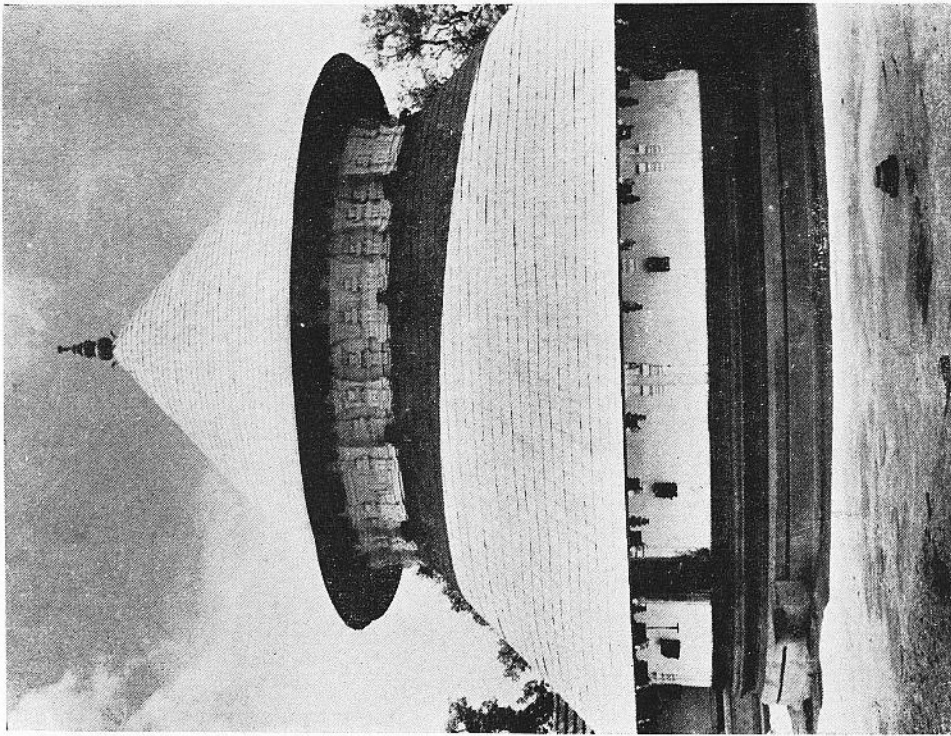


A



B

A, Tirunillai: Śiva temple, inner shrine, and B, Nemam : Niramankara temple. See pp. 63, 209-10 and 215-16



A

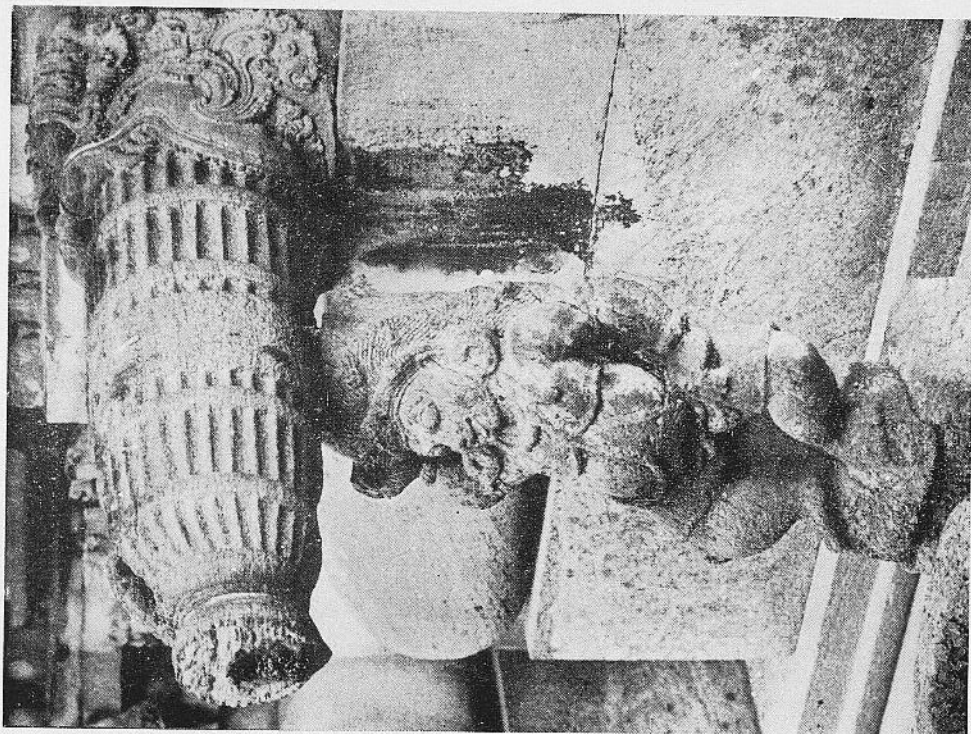
Manjeri, Karikkad-kshetram: A, Subrahmanya temple, and B, its inscribed adishthāna. See pp. 200-201



B



A



B

Trichur: *Vaḍakkumāḷha temple, pranāla with bhūta-figure, A, Vaḍakkumāḷha shrine, and B, Rāma shrine. See pp. 112 and 204*

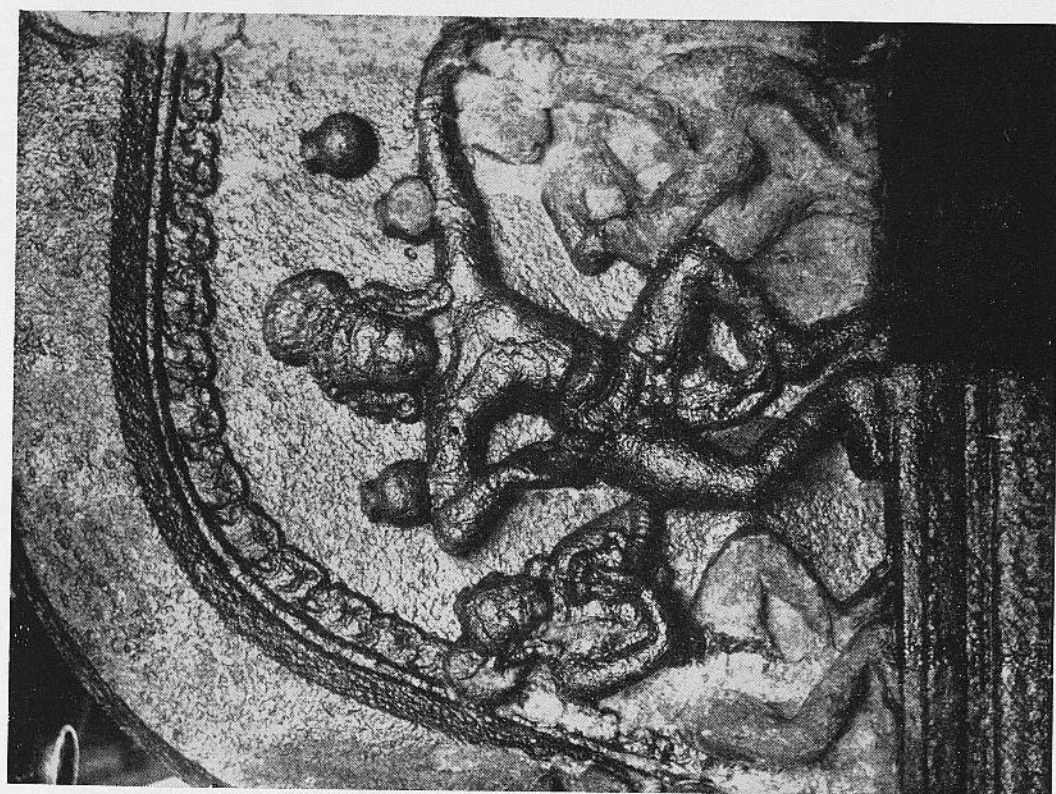


A



B

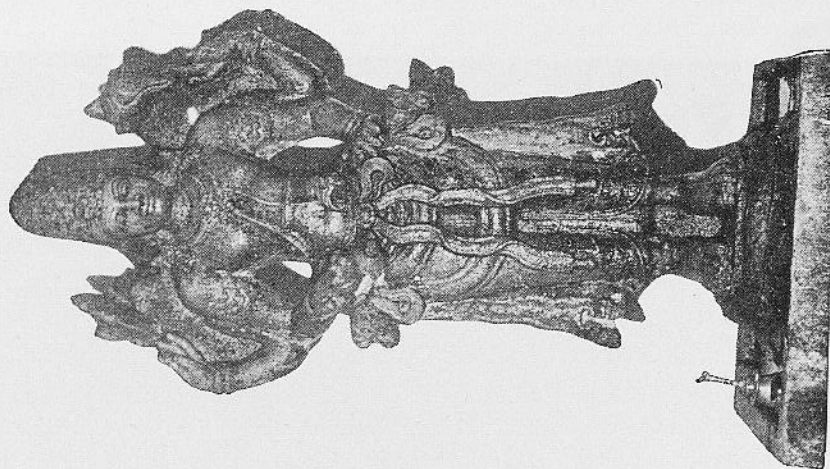
A, *Triprayar*: Rāma temple, *adhishṭhāna* and *prajāpā* with *bhūta*-figure; and B, *Tirunillai*: Śiva temple, close view of inner shrine.
See pp. 112 and 209



B



A



C

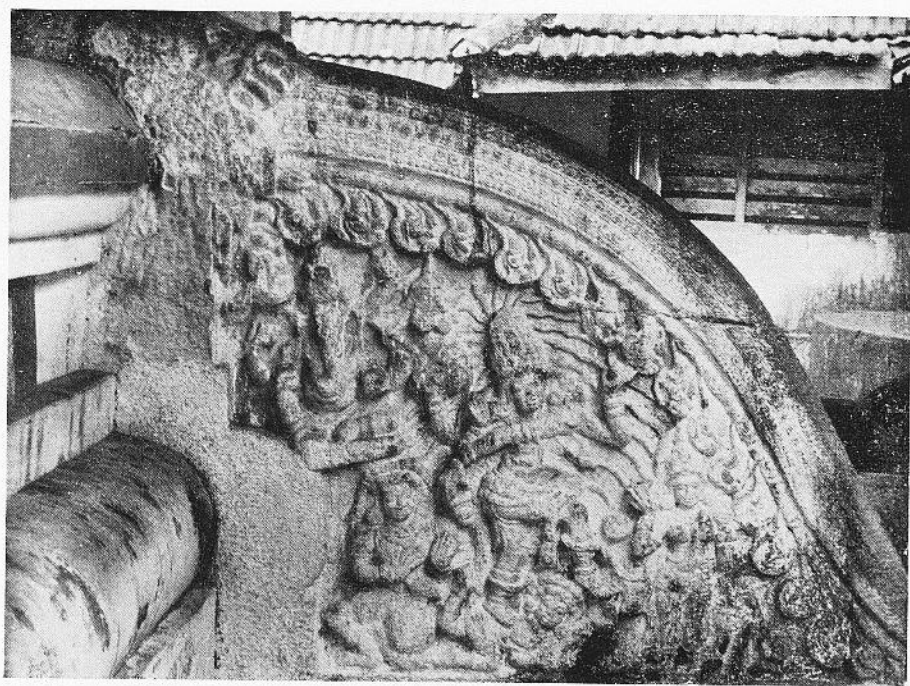
A, Trivikramanglam: Vishnu temple, dvāra-pāla, B, Kidangur: Subrahmanya temple, dance-scene on banister; and C, Neman: Niranankara temple, image of Vishnu. See pp. 60, 108 and 111-12



Trivikramangalam: Vishnu temple, dance-scene on banister. See p. 112

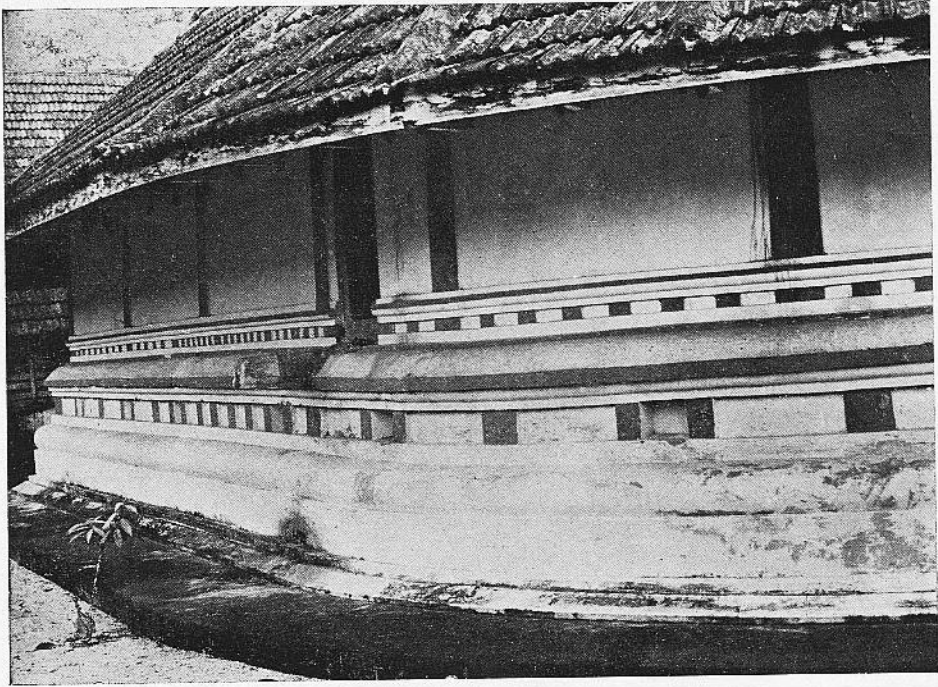


A



B

A, Trivikramangalam: Vishnu temple, dance-scene on banister; and B, Kizhavellur: Vāmana temple, carvings on banister. See pp. 112-13 and 115

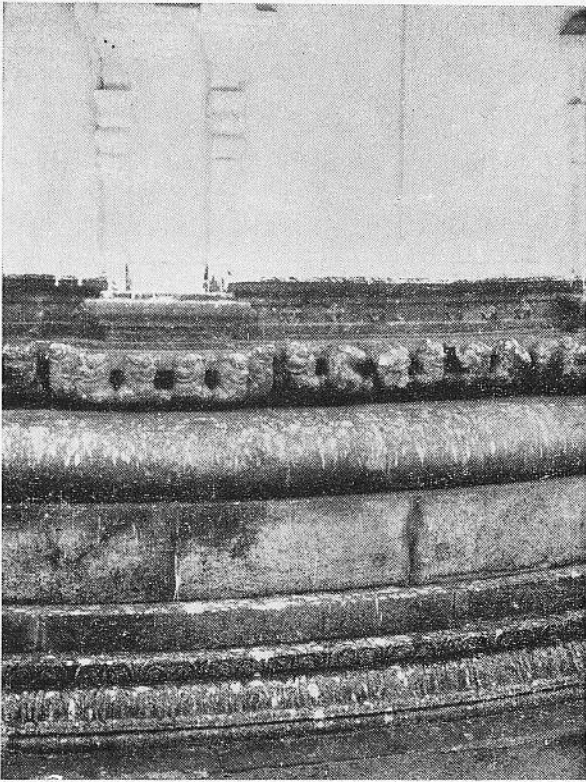


A

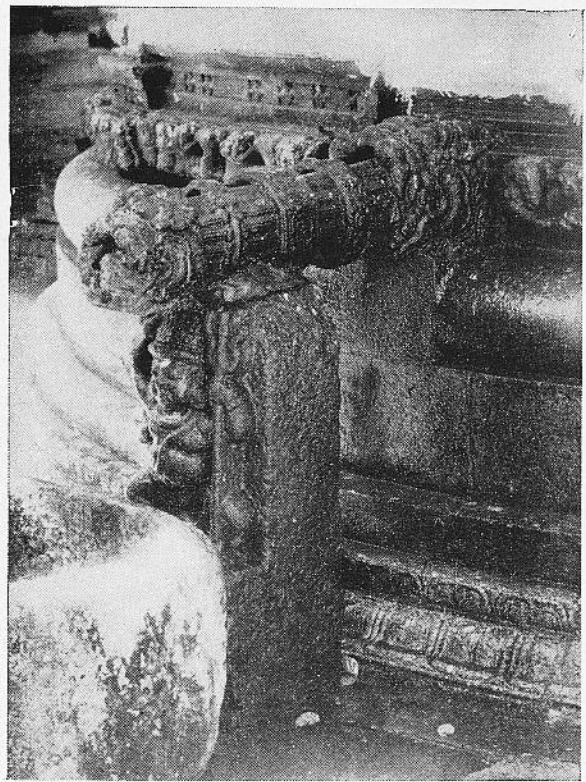


B

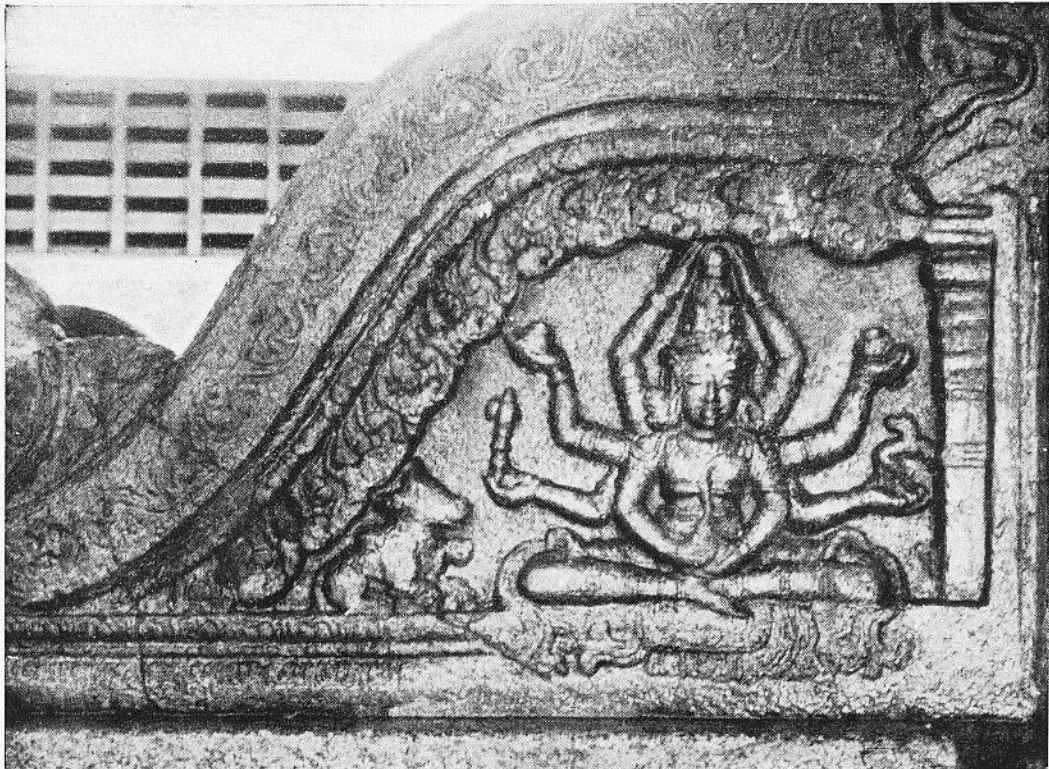
A, Kizhavellur: *Vāmana* temple; and B, Punatur: *Śrī-Trikōṭēśvara* temple. See pp. 217 and 220-22



A

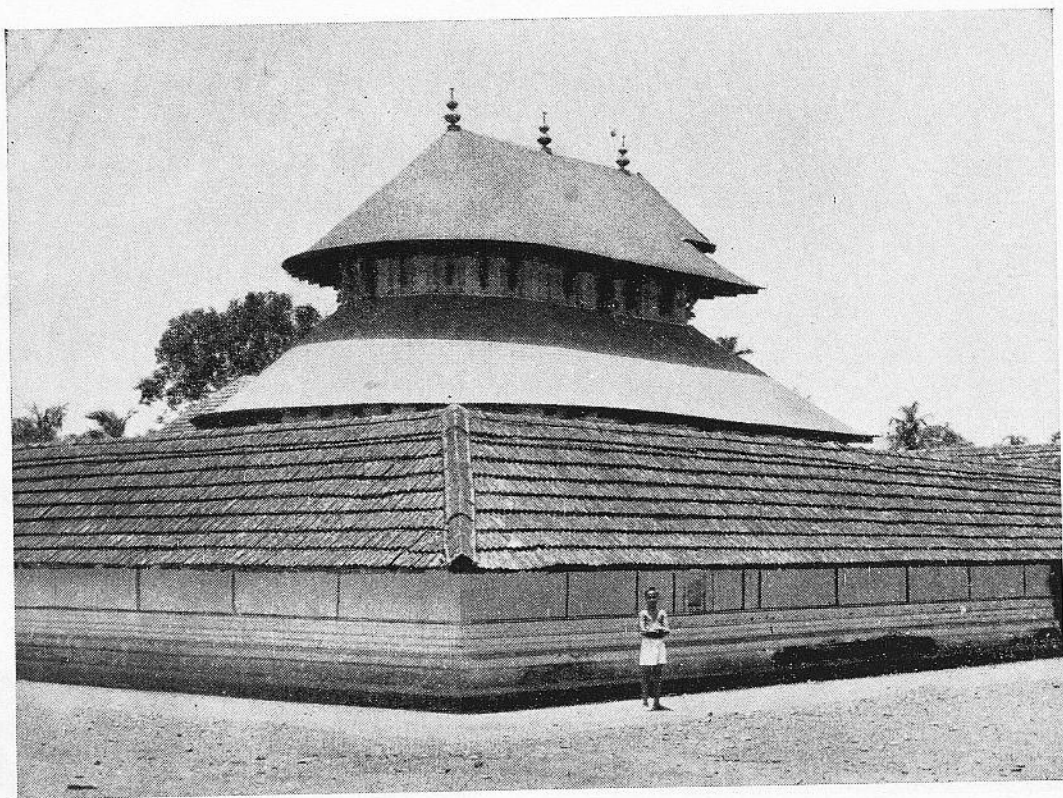


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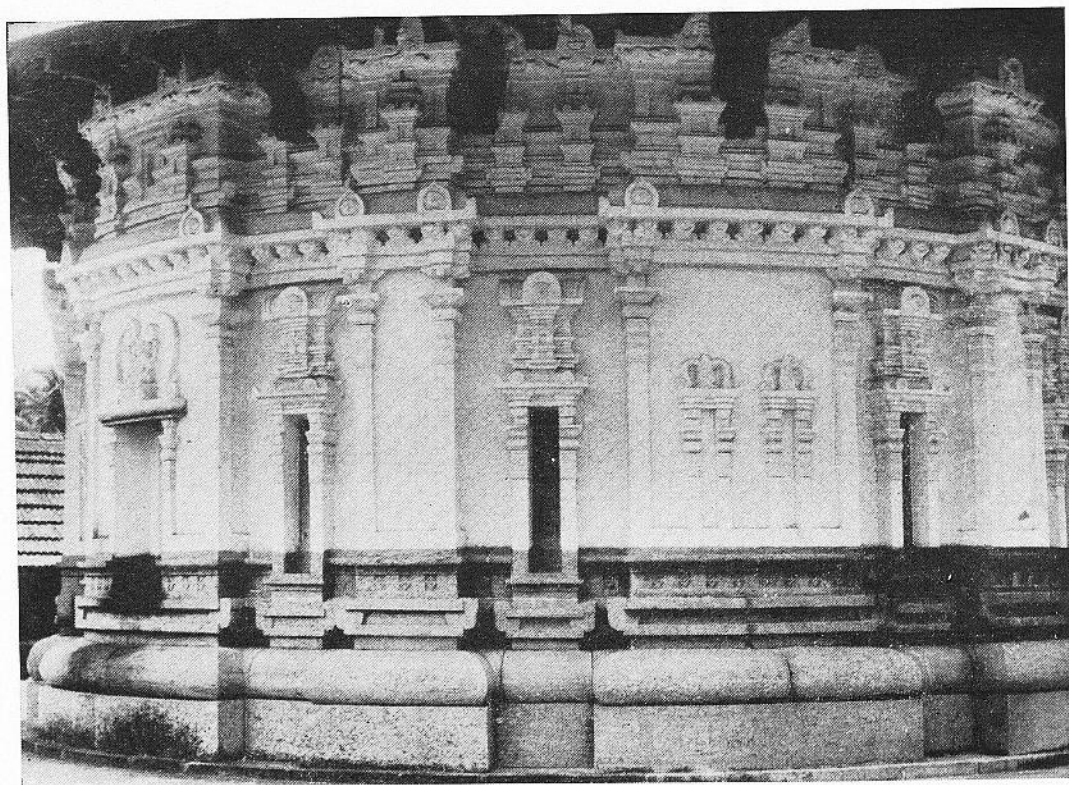


C

Punalur : Śrī-Trikoṭēśvara temple, A, adhishṭhāna, B, praṇāla, and C, carving on banister. See pp. 112 and 217-18



A

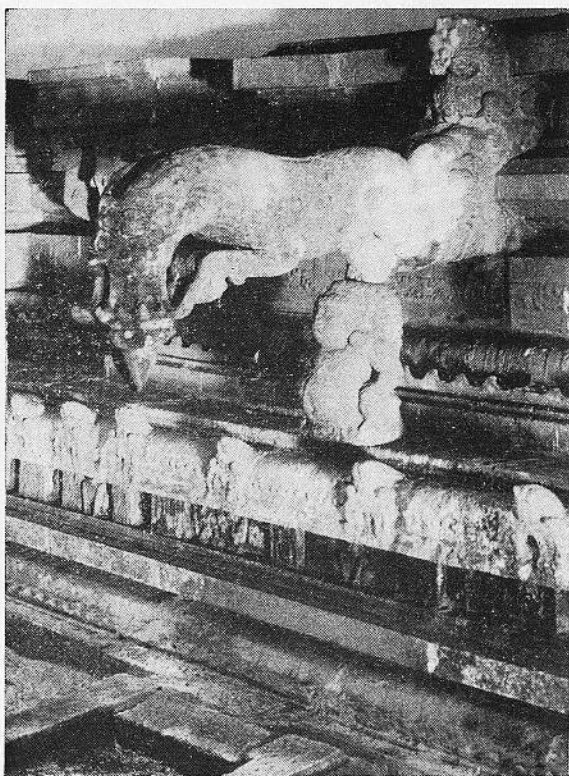


B

Nedumpura: Śiva temple, A, general view, and B, close view of adhishthāna and wall. See pp. 223-25



A

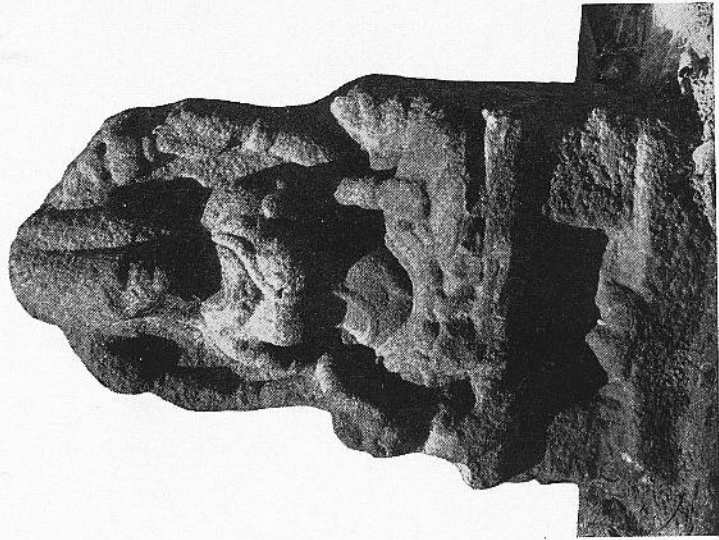


B



C

Quilon: A, Gaṇapati temple, B, Rāmēśvara temple, adhishṭhāna and praṇāla, and C, carved banister. See pp. 235-38



A

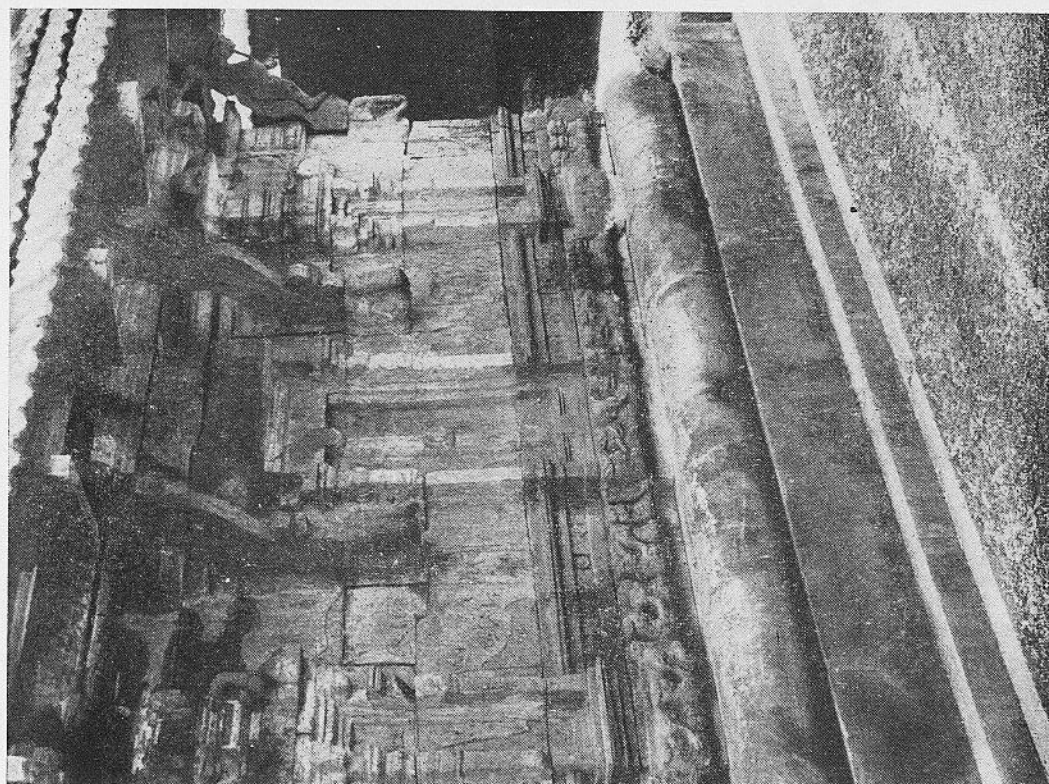
A, Nenam: Niramakara temple, image of Brāhmī; and B, Tenari: Subrahmanya temple, image of Subrahmanya. See pp. 106, 111 and 215



B

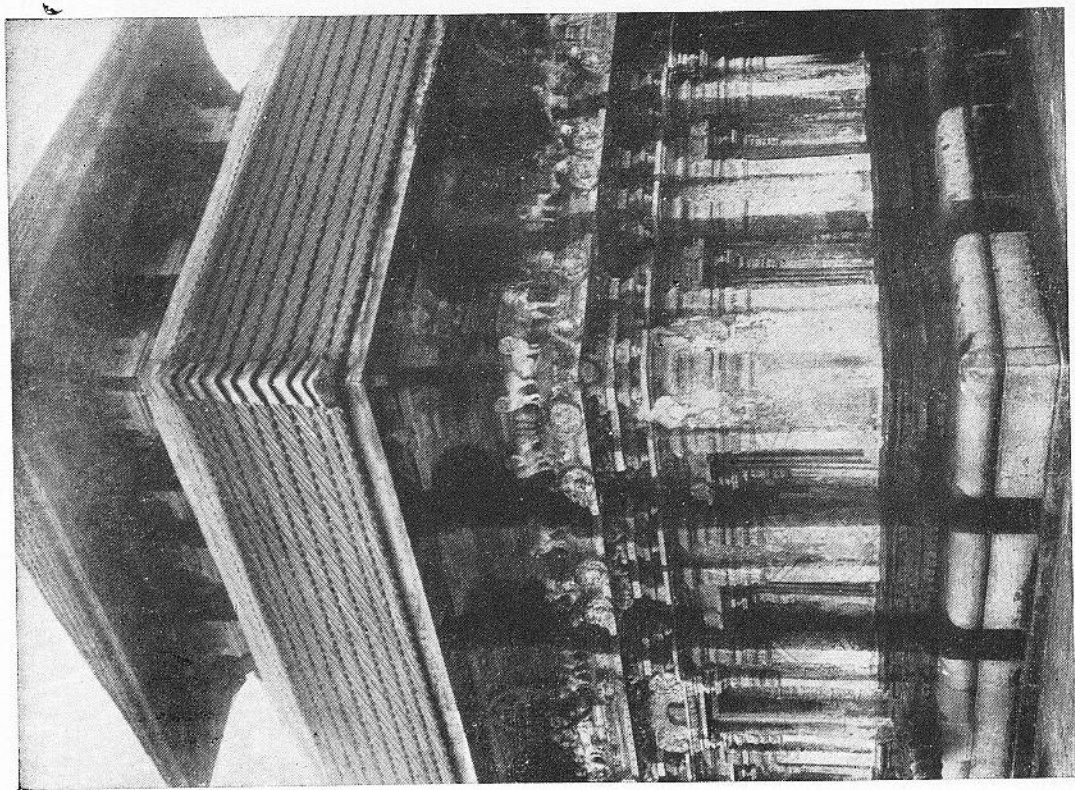


A



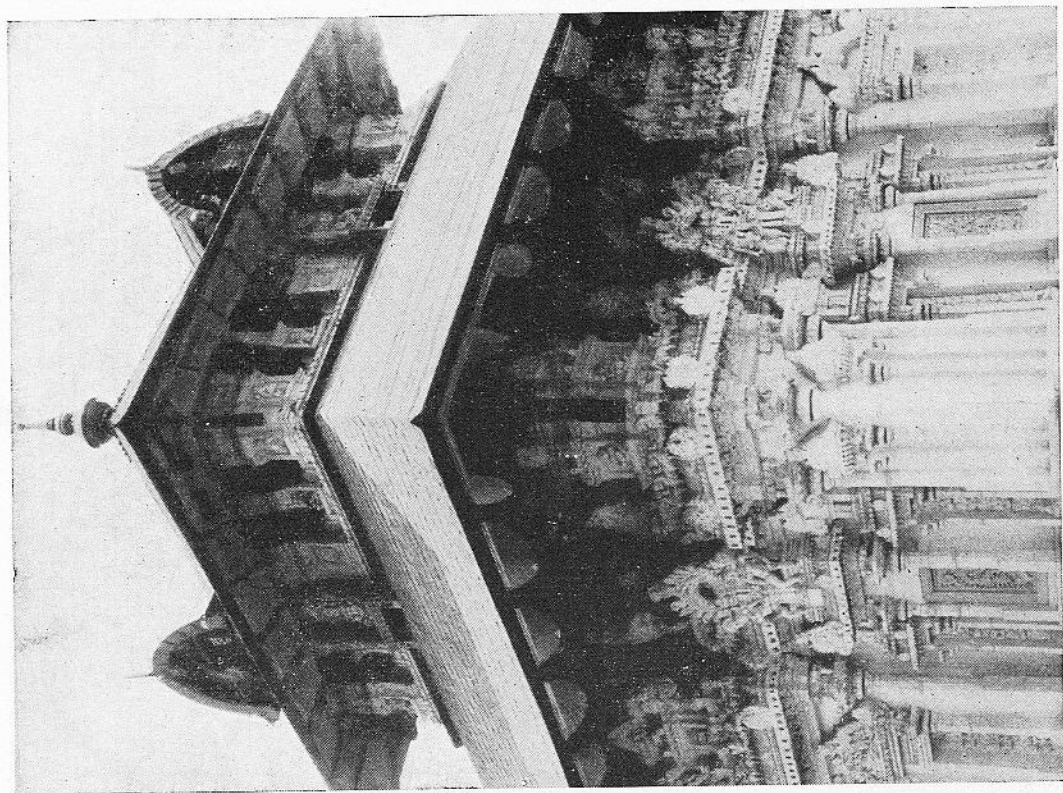
B

Podiyal: Krishna temple, A, image of Vishnu, and B, close view of adhashthana and wall. See pp. 110 and 243

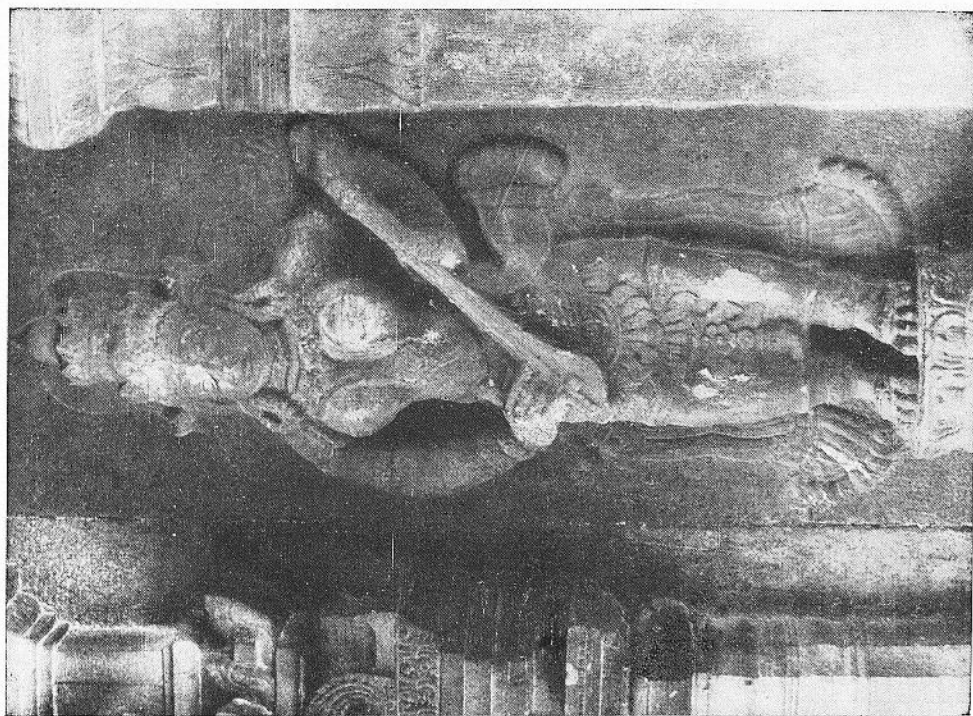


A

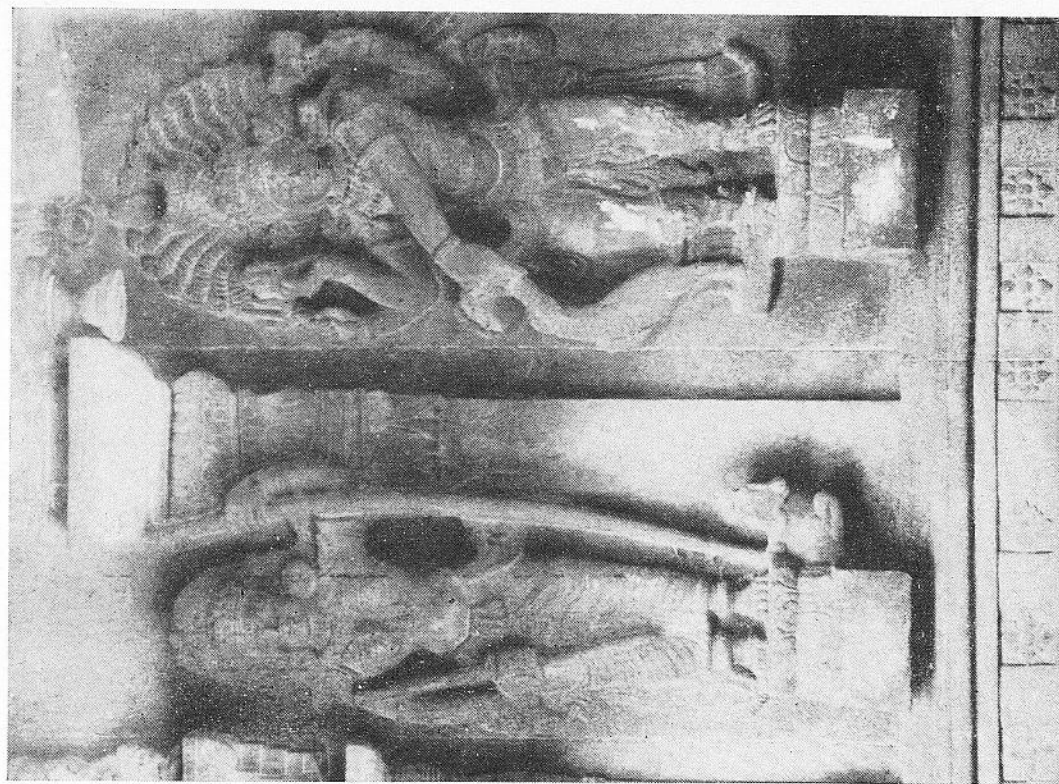
A, Kozhikode: Tali temple, B, Udayanapuram: Subrahmanya temple. See pp. 244-48



B

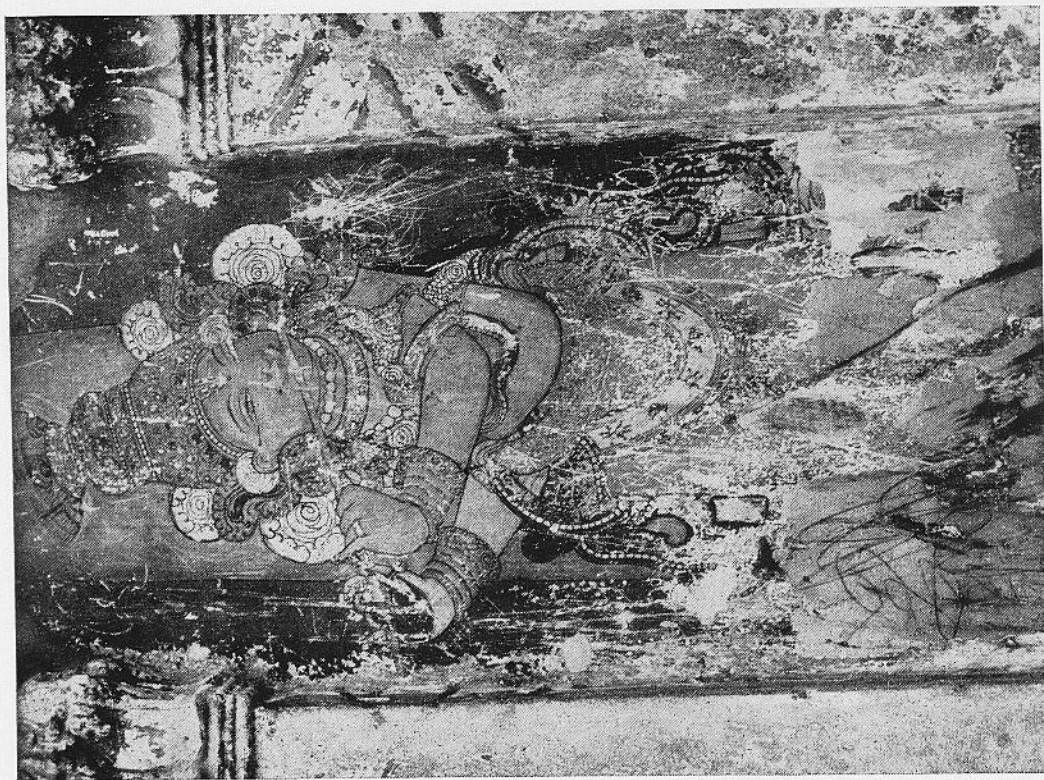


A



B

Kozhikode: Tali temple, A, reliefs of Saraswati, B, Bhagavati and Siva. See pp. 113 and 248

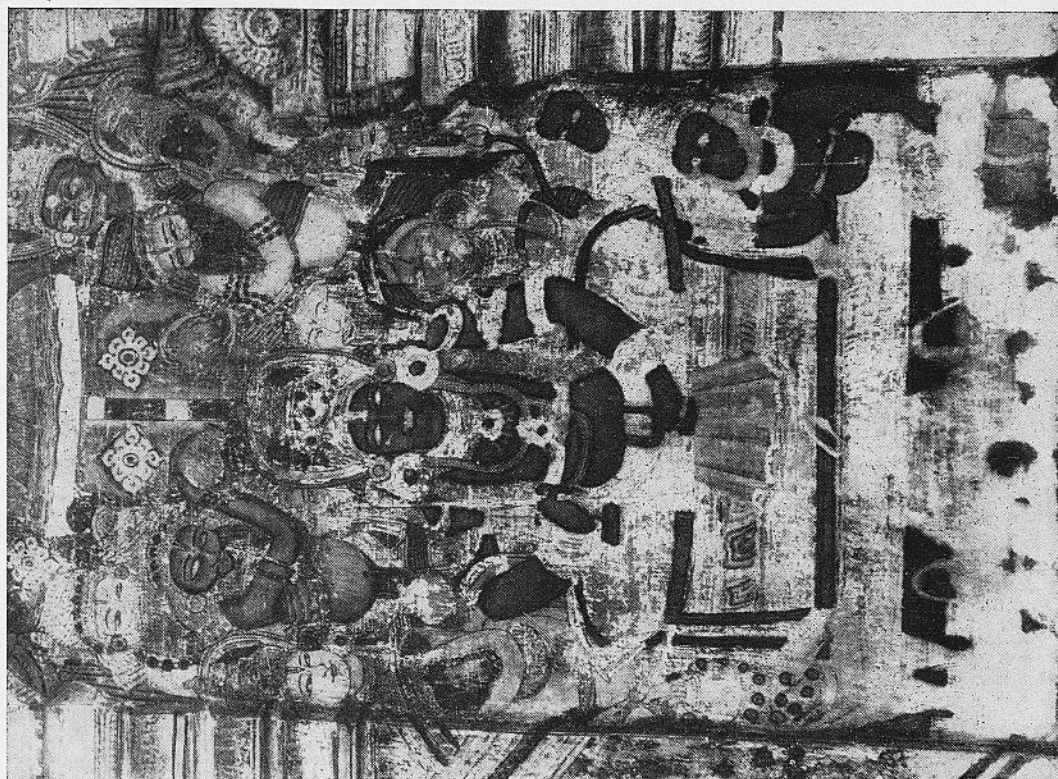


A



B

A, Kozhikode: Tali temple, murals showing *Vēṇugōpāla*; and B, Kānirāgaḍ: *Vaidyanāthasvāmī* temple, murals. See pp. 124-28

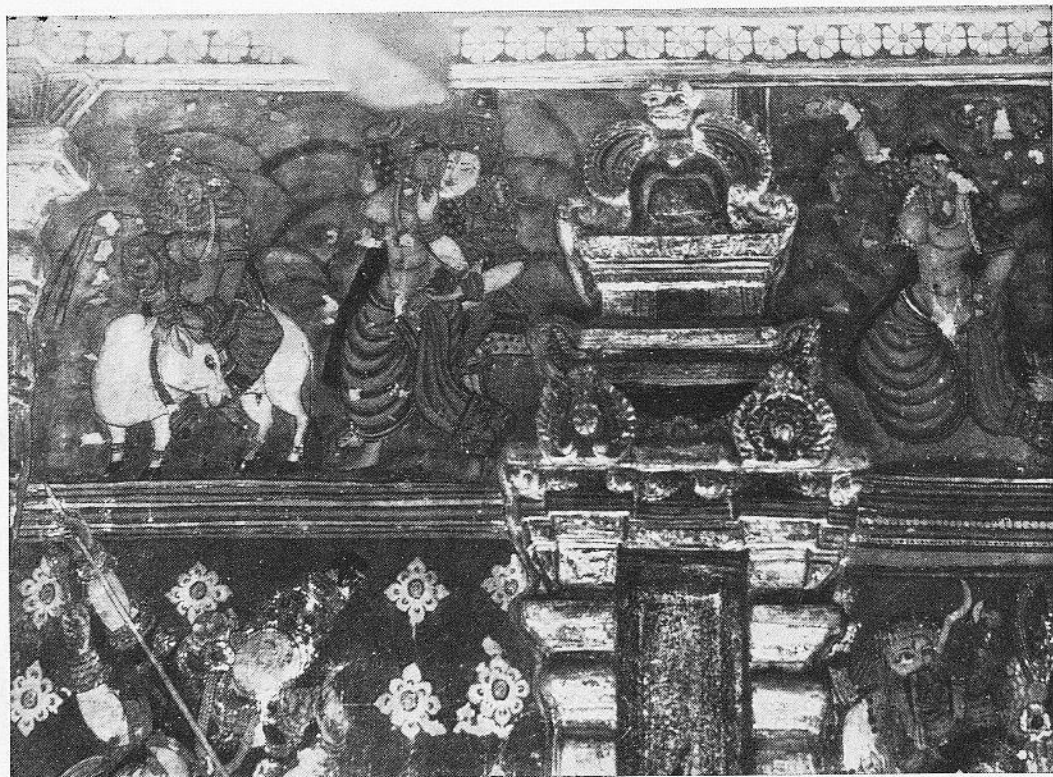


B

A, Palliyurkavu: Śiva temple, murals depicting Umāsahila Śiva; and B, Kumblanad: Pallimanna Śiva temple, murals showing Rāma's coronation. See pp. 124-28



A

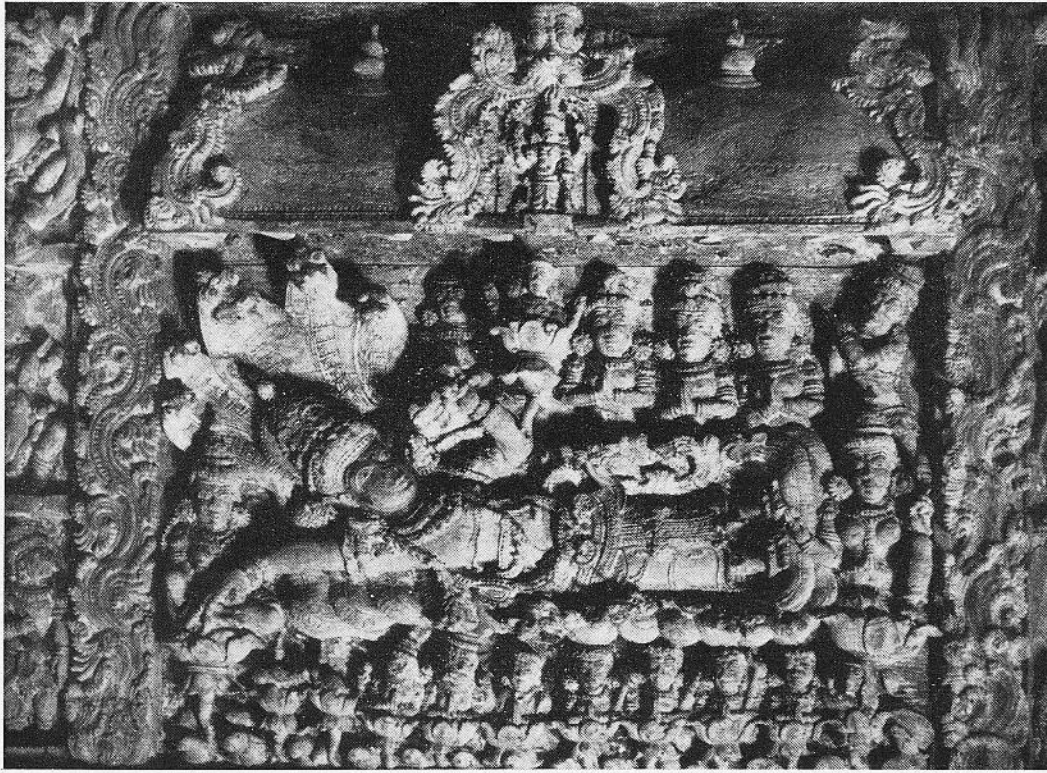


A



B

A, Kumblanad: Pallimanna Śiva temple, murals depicting Śiva with Mōhini; and B, Manambur: Subrahmanya temple, wood-carvings showing dancing Śiva. See pp. 117 and 124-28

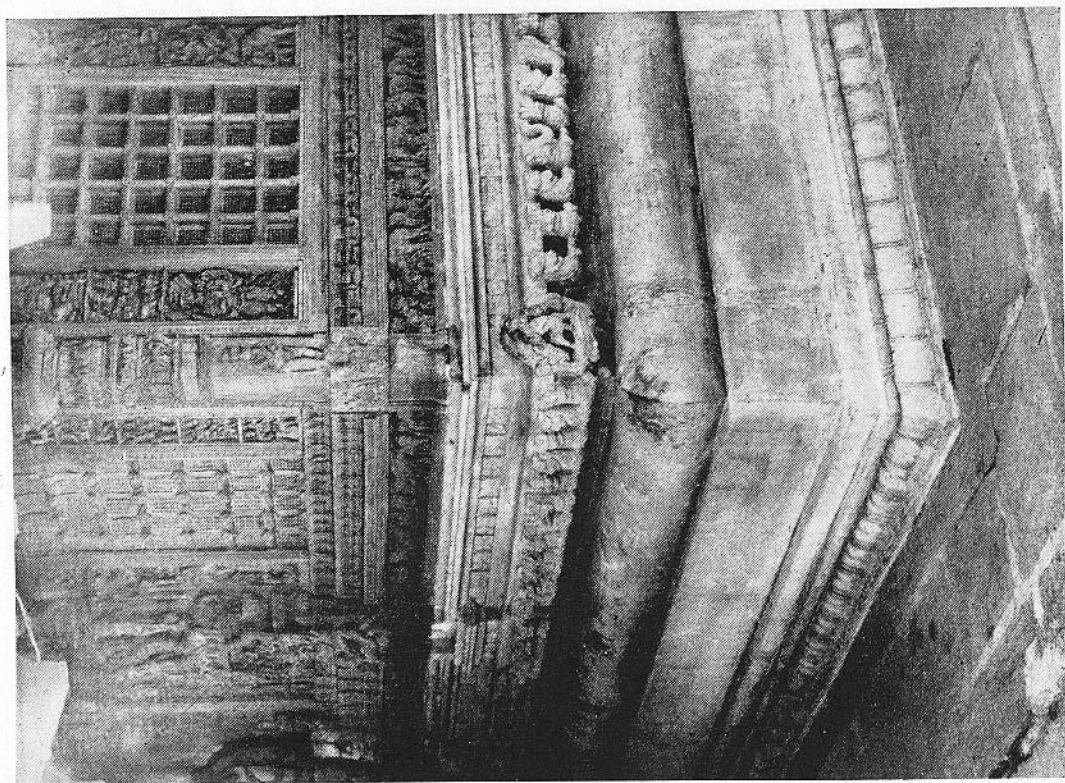


A

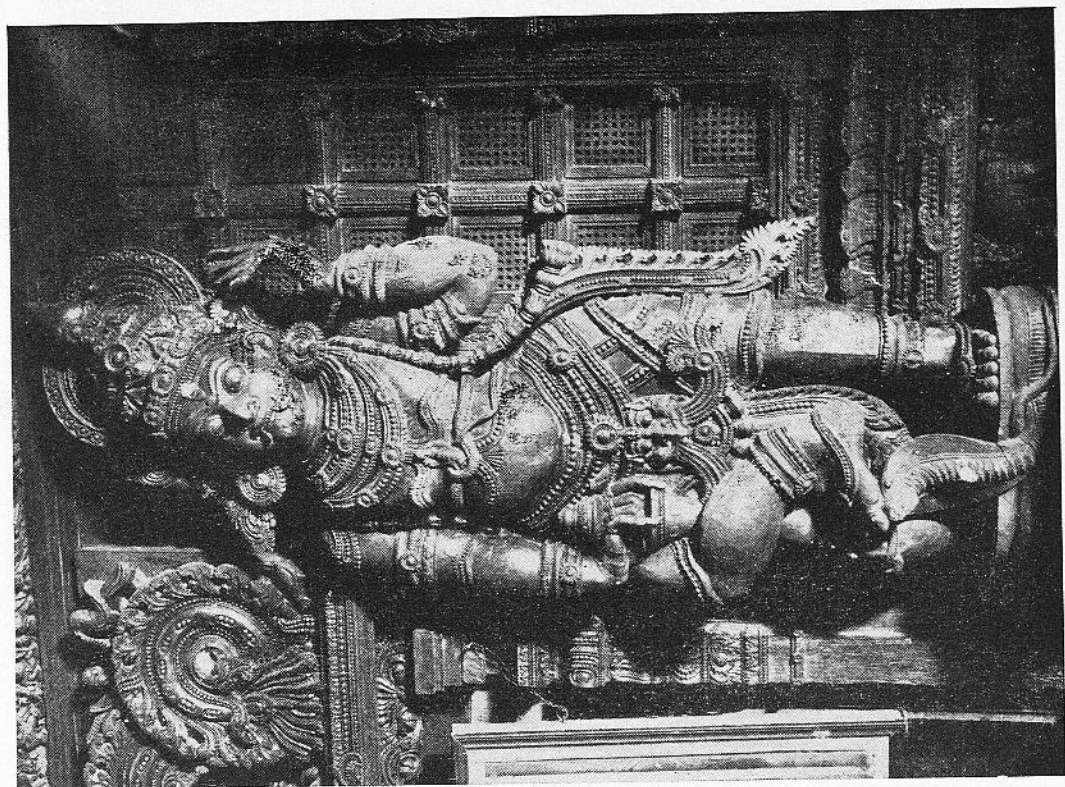


B

A, Manambur: Subrahmanya temple, wood-carvings of Anantaśāyī Viṣṇu; and B, Venganellur: Tiruembilappan temple, wood-carving on architrave of vaḷiambalam. See pp. 117 and 120

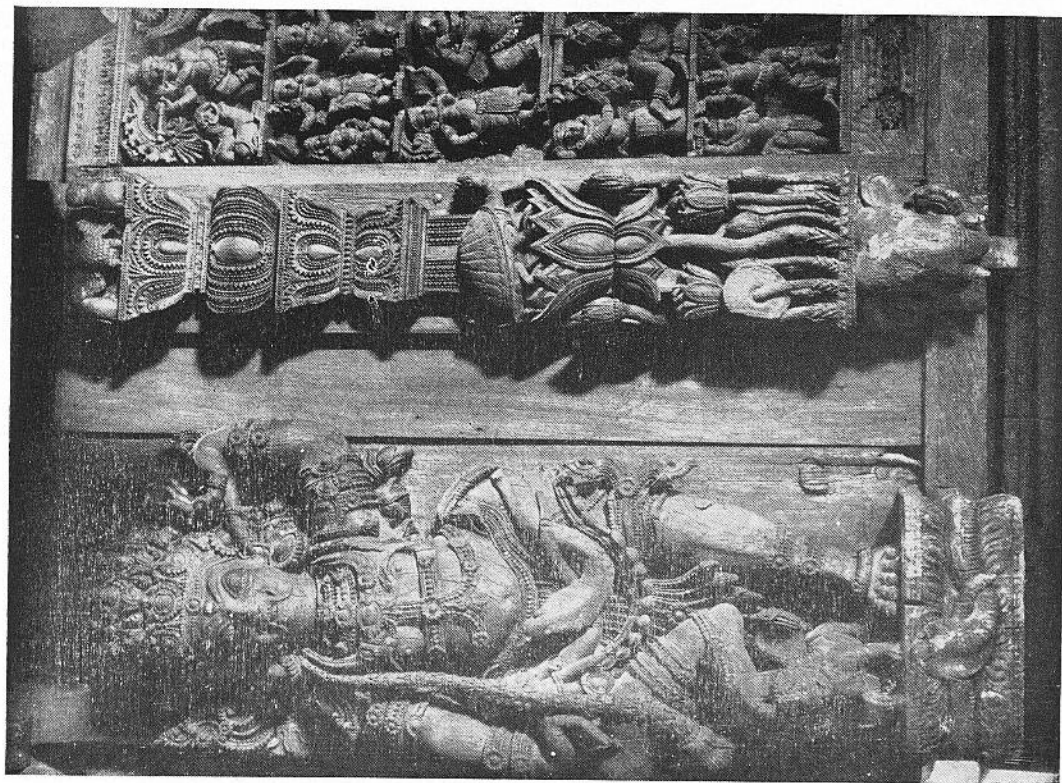


A

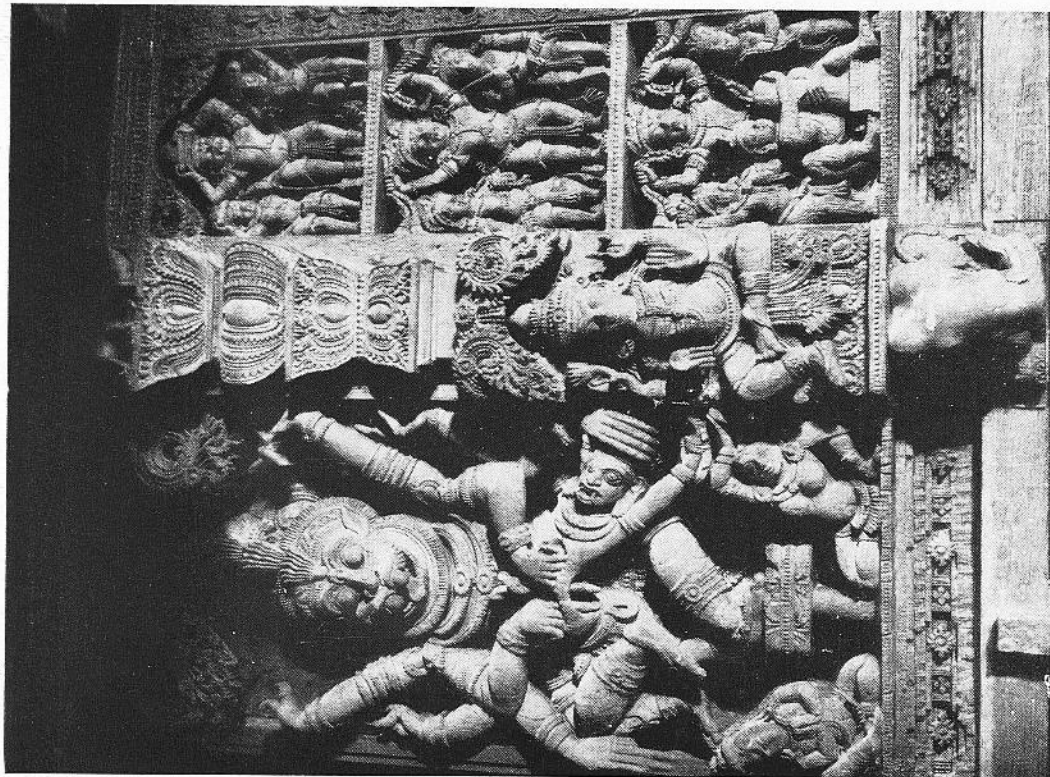


B

Chengannur : Narasiṁha temple, A, carved wooden wall above granite adhiṣṭhāna, B, wooden dvāra-pāla. See pp. 120 and 249-51

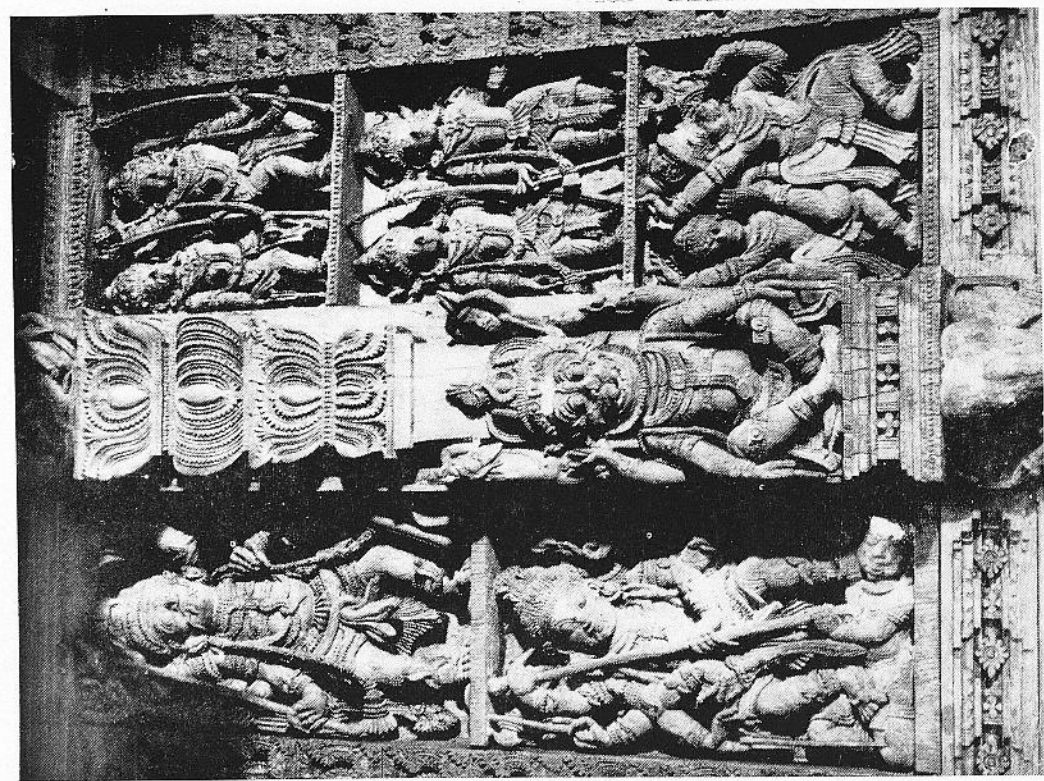


A

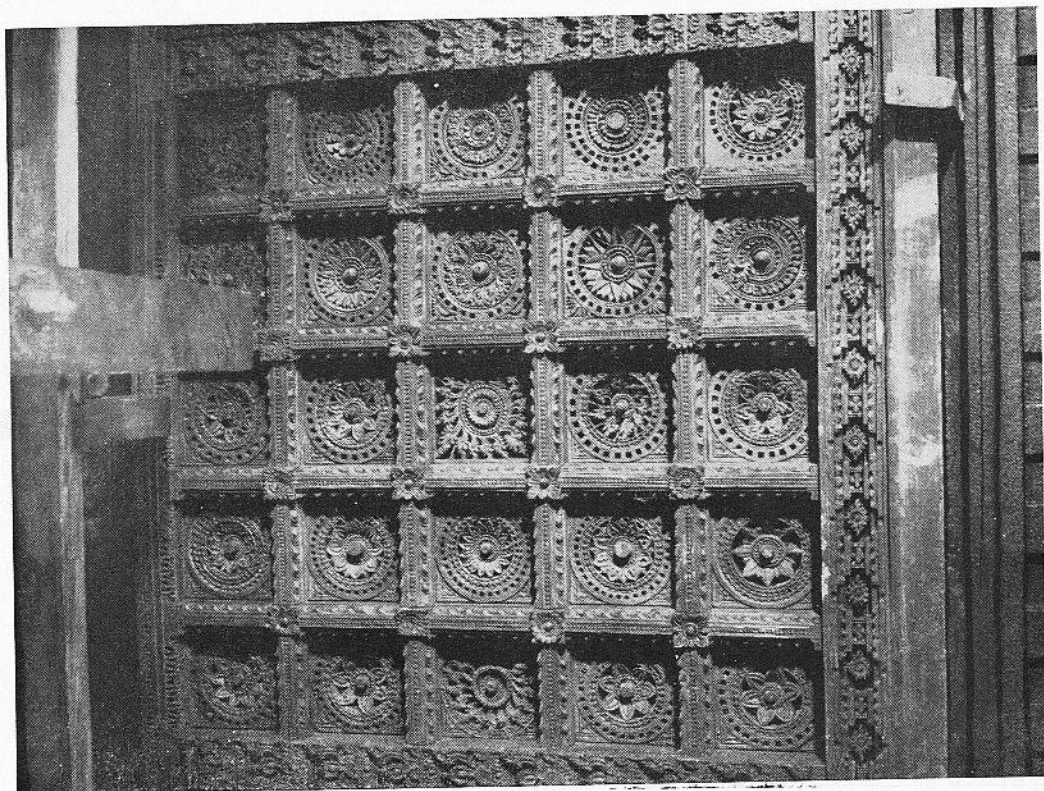


B

Kaviyur: Siva temple, A and B, wood-carvings on wall. See pp. 120 and 165-66

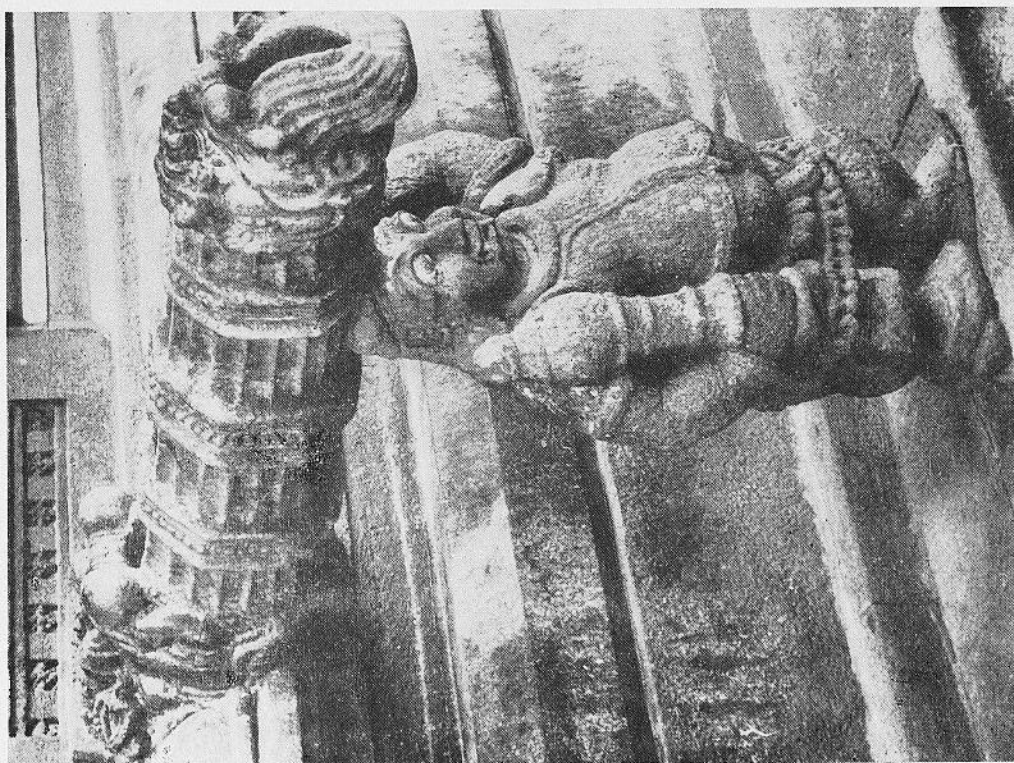


A



B

Kaviyur: Śiva temple, A and B, wood-carvings on wall. See pp. 120 and 165-66



A

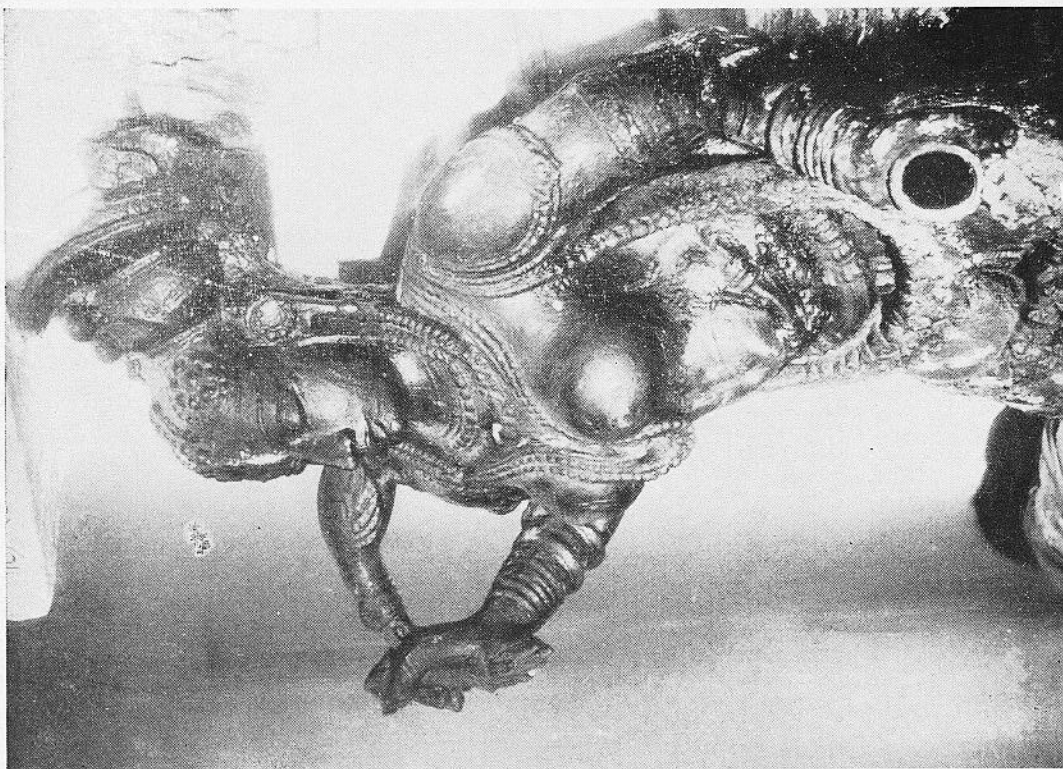


B

A, Vaikam: Śiva temple, B, Tiruvillanāla: Rāma temple, showing praṇāla with bhūta-figure. See p. 114

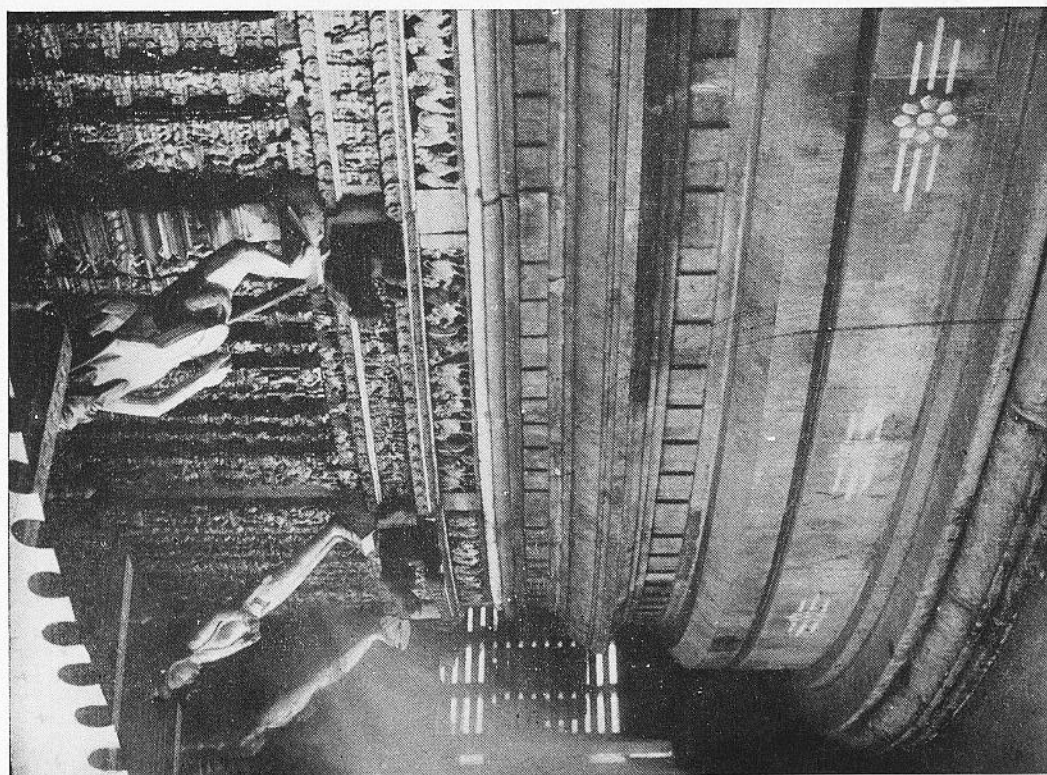


Ettumanur: Mahādēva temple, murals depicting dancing Śiva on gōpura wall. See pp. 124 and 259



B

and B, Varkkalla: Janārdana temple, chauri-bearer. See pp. 115 and 259-60



A

A, Ettumanur: Mahādēva temple, details of granite adishthāna and carved wooden wall; and B, Varkkalla: Janārdana



A

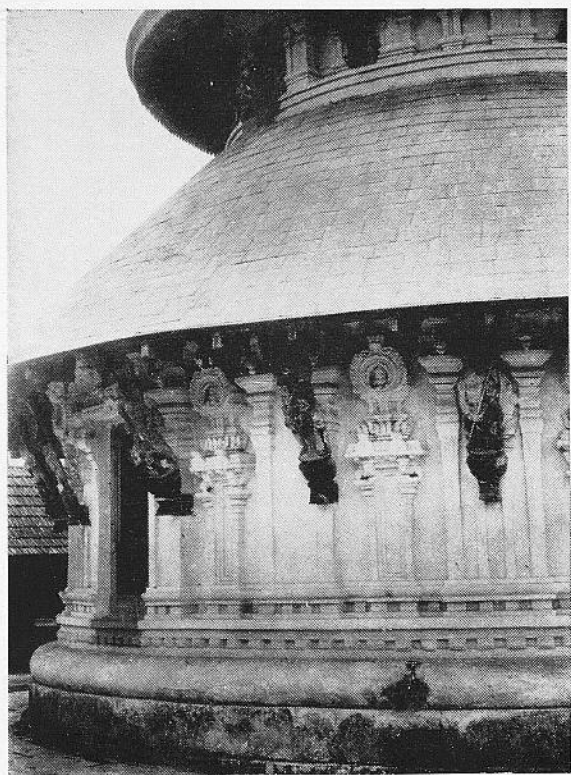


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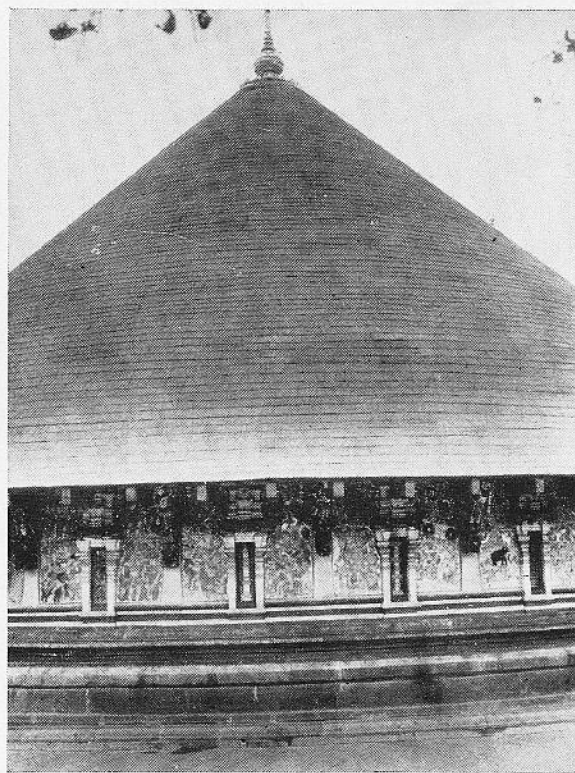


C

A, Aimanam: Pāṇḍava-Śāstā temple, murals; B, Tiruvalattur: Bhagavatī temple, dvāra-pālikā; and C, Payyanur: Subrahmanya temple. See pp. 114, 124-25 and 264-65



A

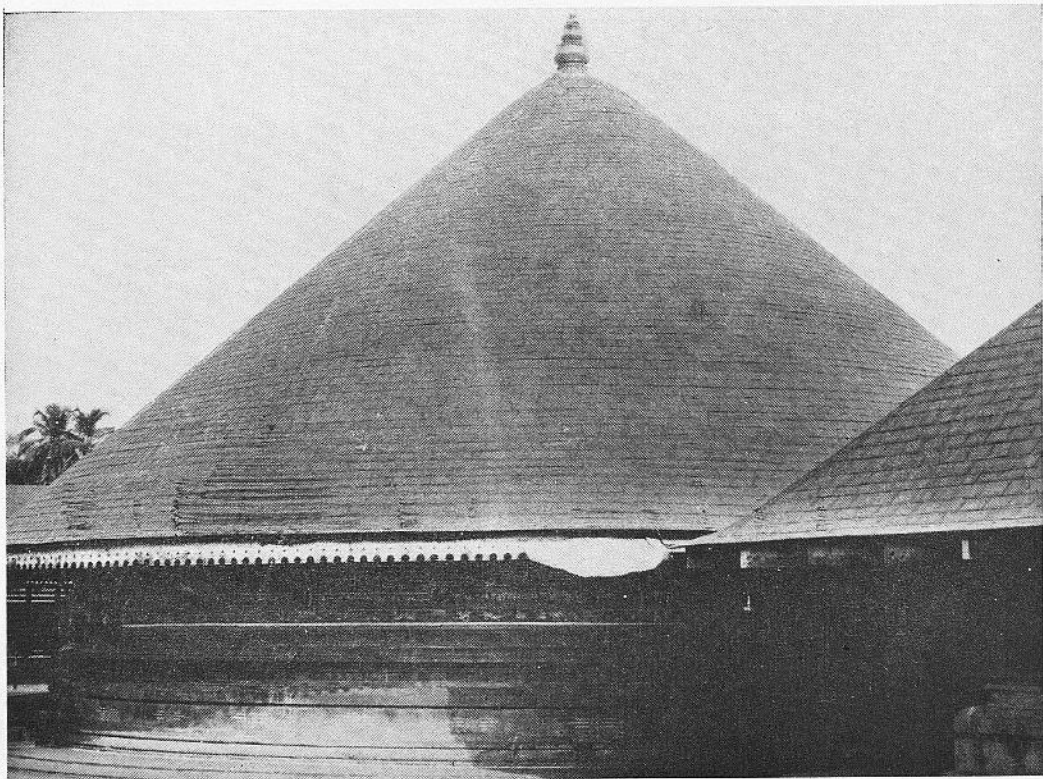


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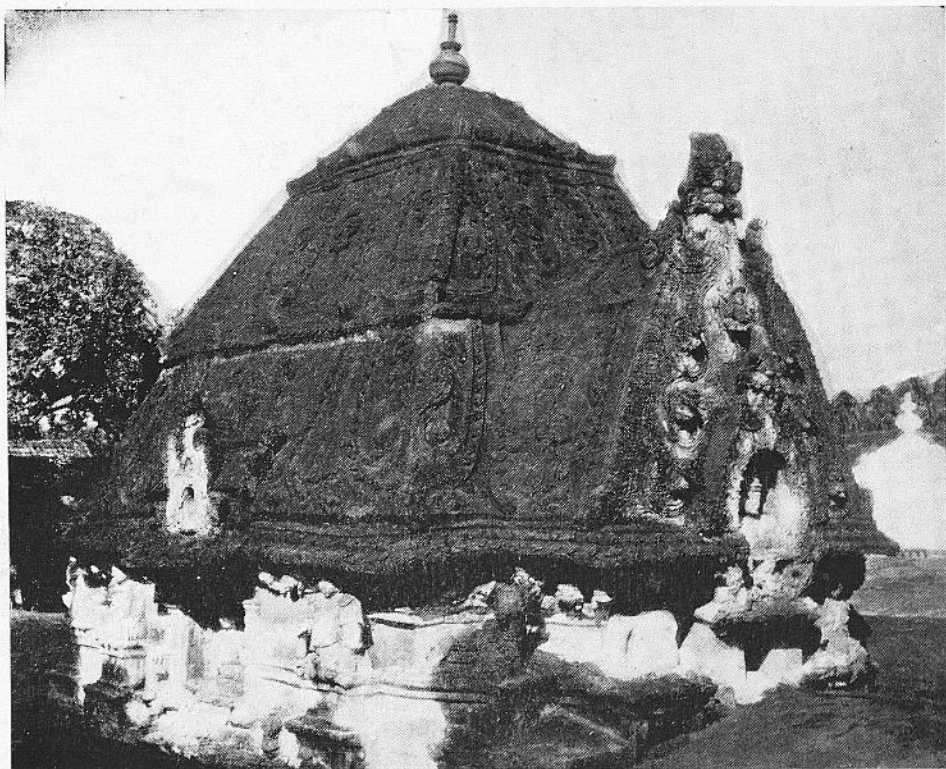


C

A, Payyanur: Subrahmanya temple, details of wall; B, Vaikam: Śiva temple; and C, Aduru: Mahāliṅgēśvara temple. See pp. 264-65 and 267-70

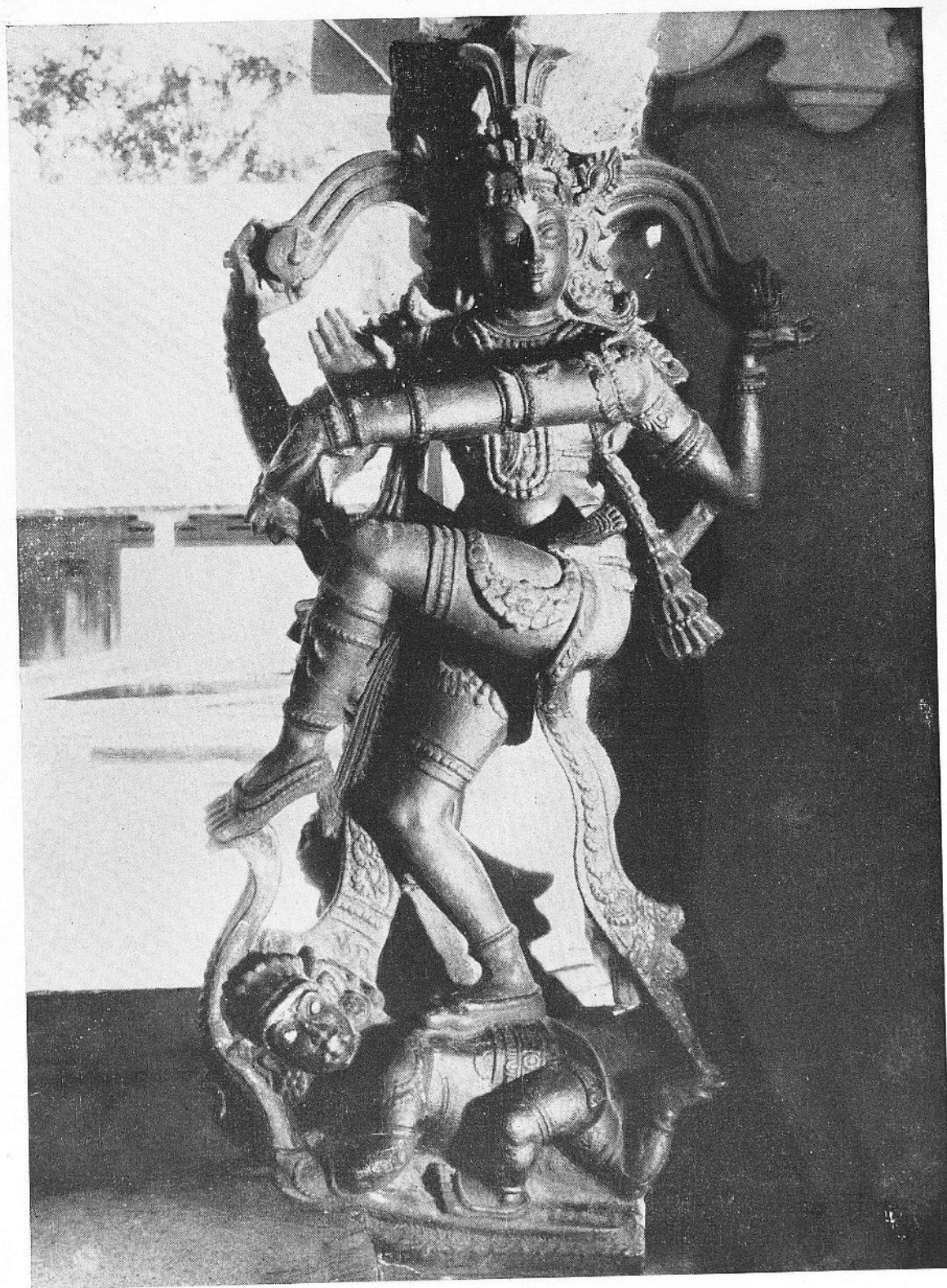


A



B

A, Ettumanur: Mahādēva temple; and B, Suchindram: Sthāṇunāthasvāmī temple, śikhara of main shrine.
See pp. 19, 233 and 259-60



Varkkalla: Janārdana temple, dancing Śiva. See p. 115



A

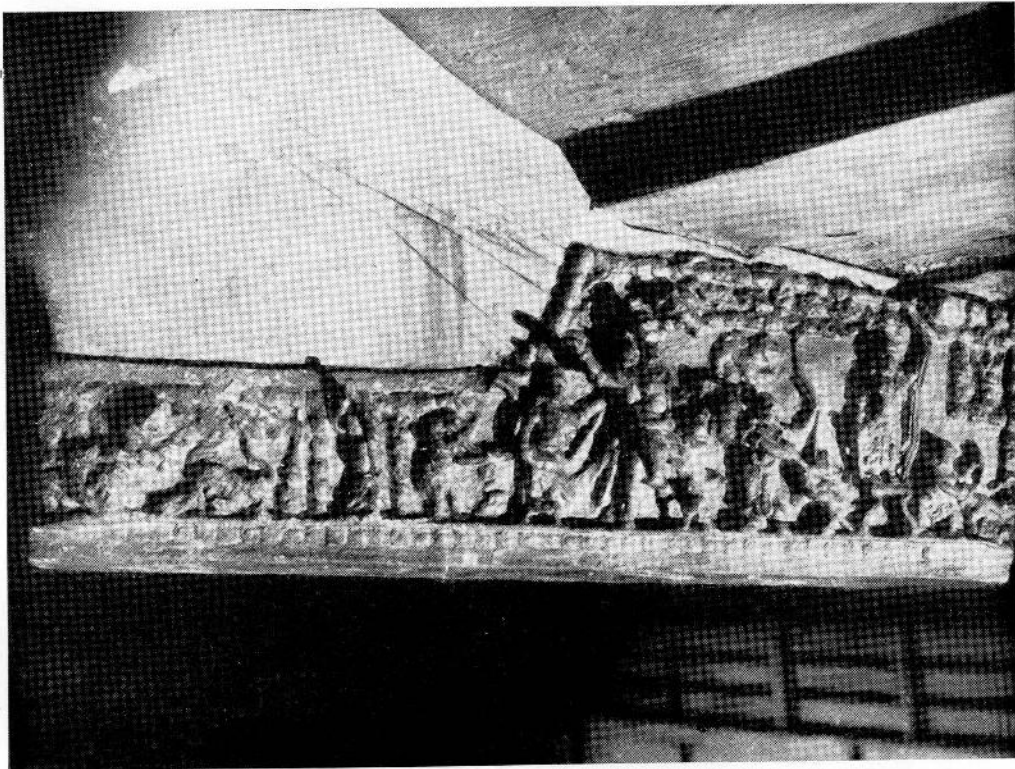


B

Trivandrum Museum: A, Vishṇu, and B, Bālakṛiṣṇa, in bronze. See pp. 121-22



A

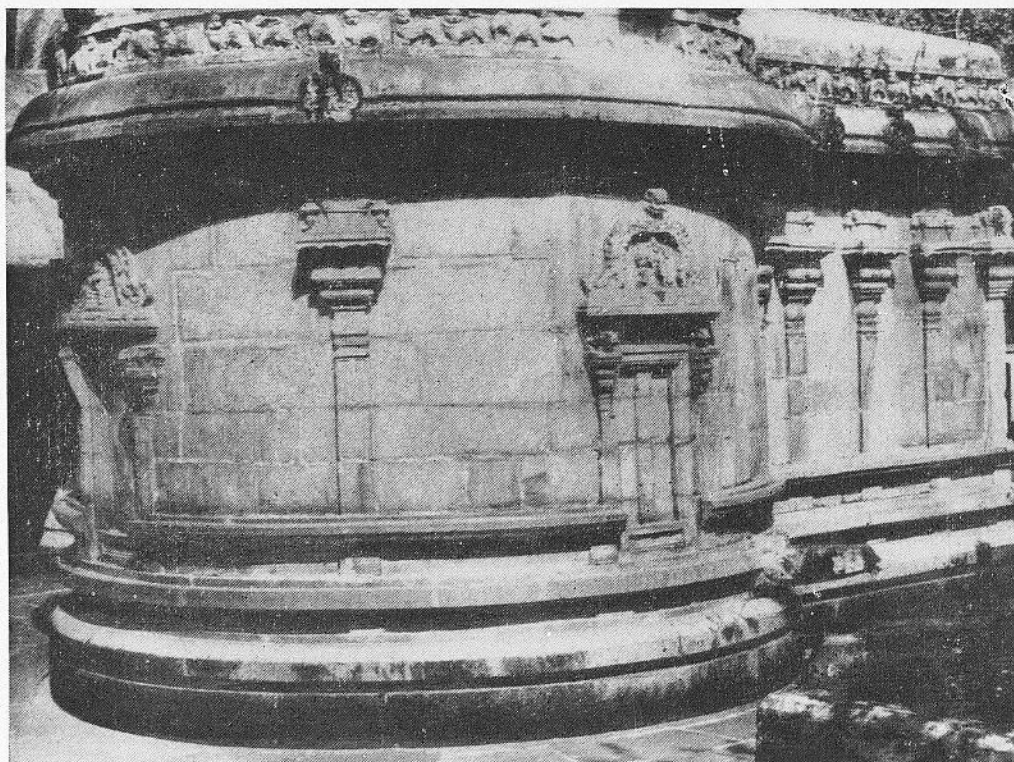


B

A, Trivandrum Museum: silver image of Śāstā; and B, Parappankod: Vishṇu temple, ornamental rafter-shoe. See p. 122

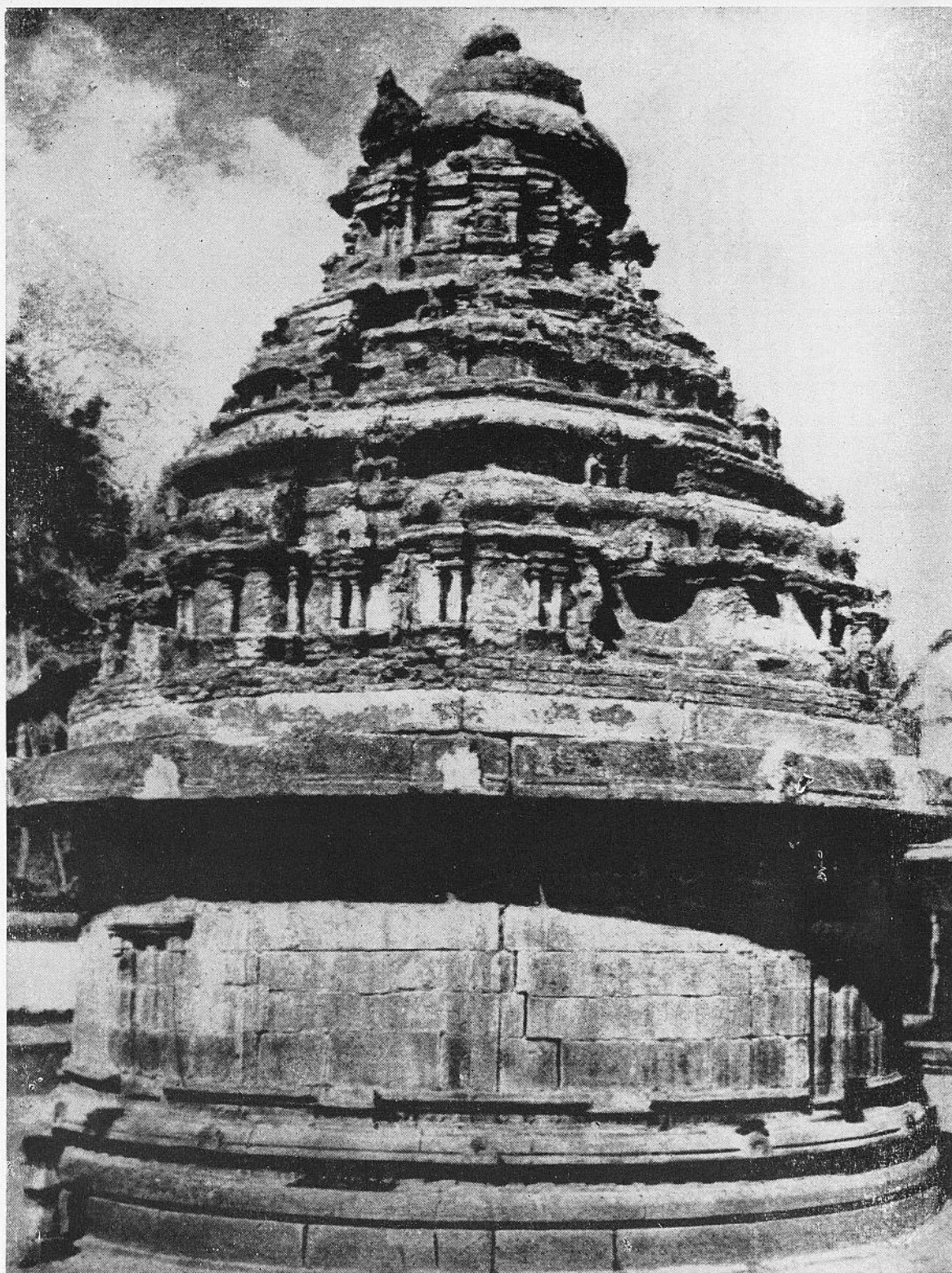


A



B

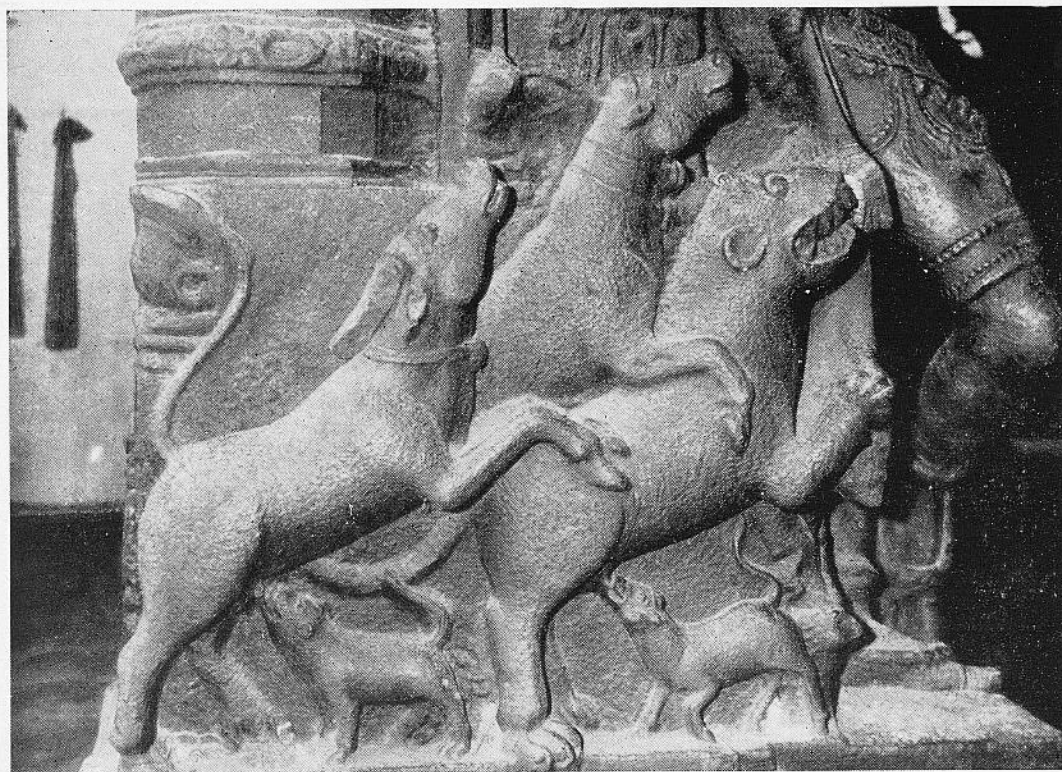
A, Kalpathi: Viṣvanātha temple, front view; and B, Tiruvallam: Paraśurāmēśvara temple.
See pp. 241-42 and 253-54



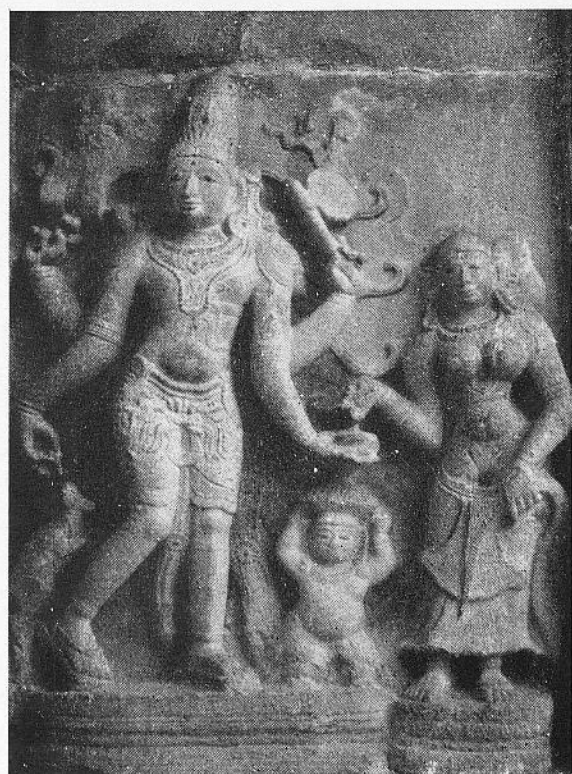
Valaya-Udayadichchapuram: Valaya-Udayēṣvaram temple. See pp. 255-56



Tiruvattar: Ādikēśavaperumāḷ temple, covered pradakshinā-patha. See p. 99



A



B

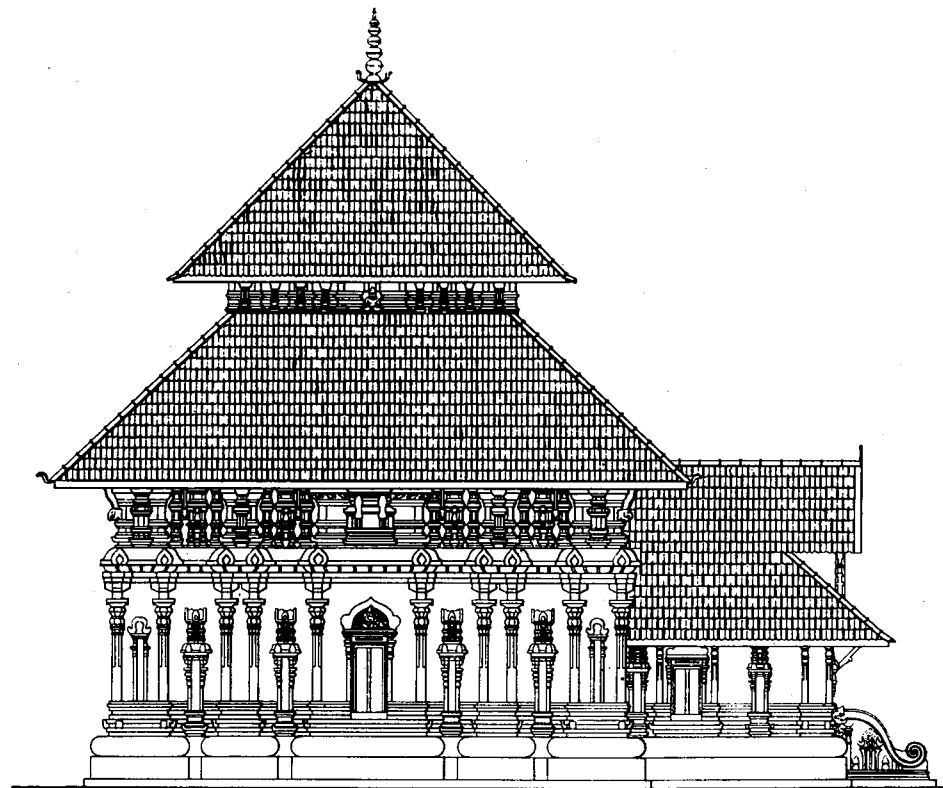


C

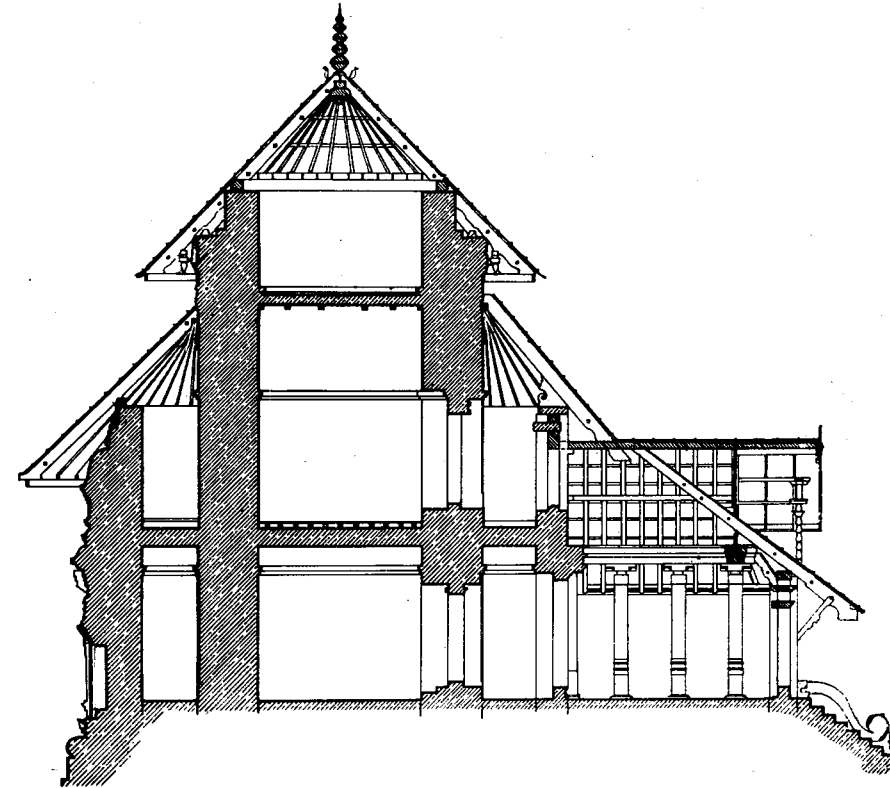
A, Tiruvattar: Ādikēśavaperumāḷ temple, carvings on pillar; B, Suchindram: Sthāṇunāthasvāmī temple, Bhikshāṭana Śiva, and C, Harihara. See pp. 99, 115-16



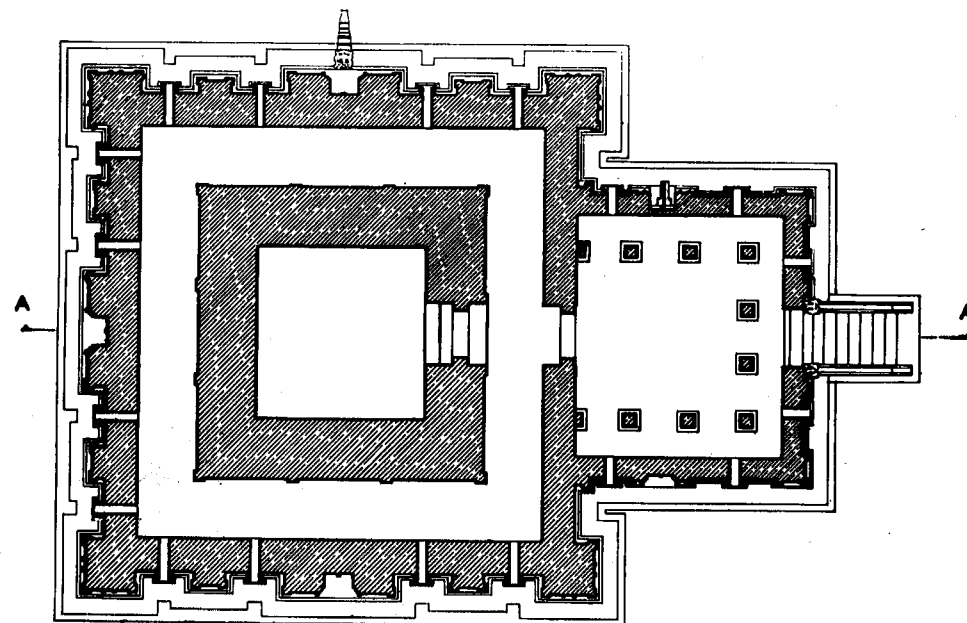
Tiruvattar: Ādikēśavaperumāḷ temple, carving on pillar. See p. 99 and 115



SIDE ELEVATION



SECTION ON A-A



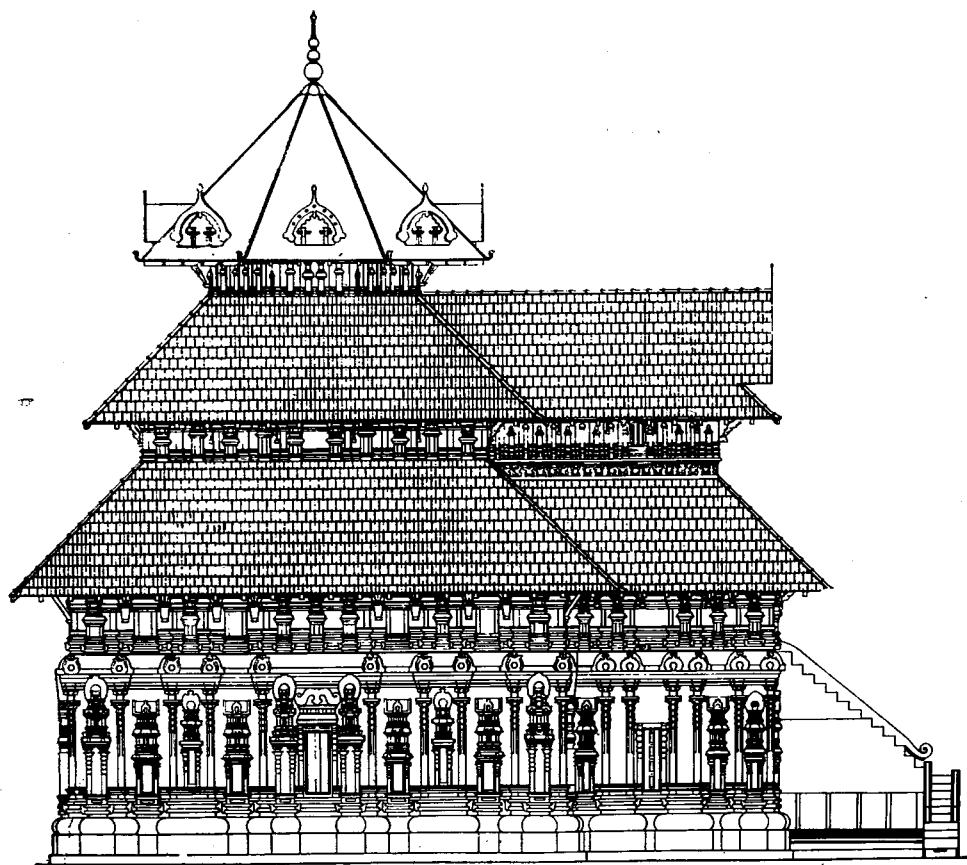
PLAN

TALI: ŚIVA TEMPLE
DISTRICT TRICHUR

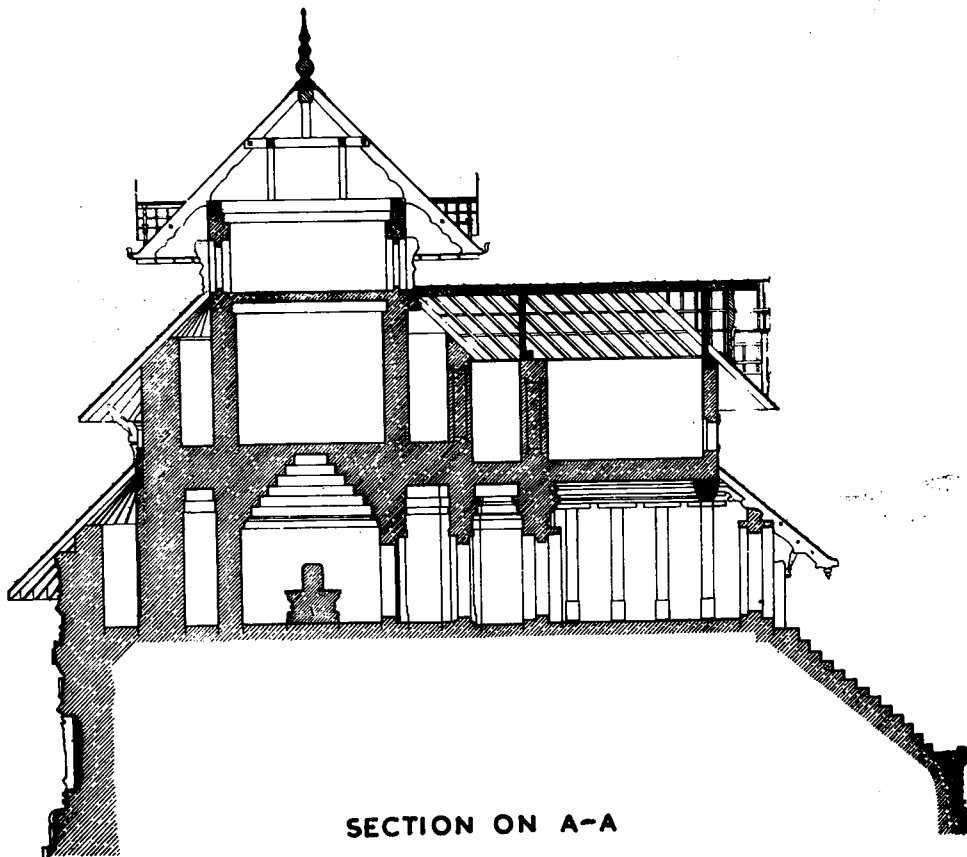
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SCALE OF FEET 4 0 4 8 12 16 20 24

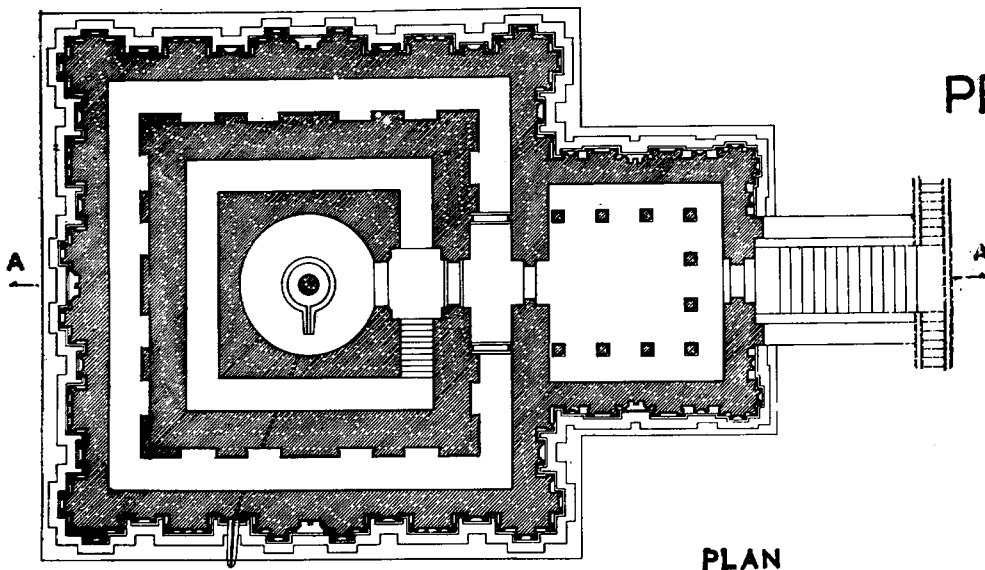




SIDE ELEVATION



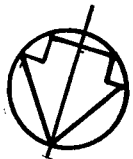
SECTION ON A-A



PLAN

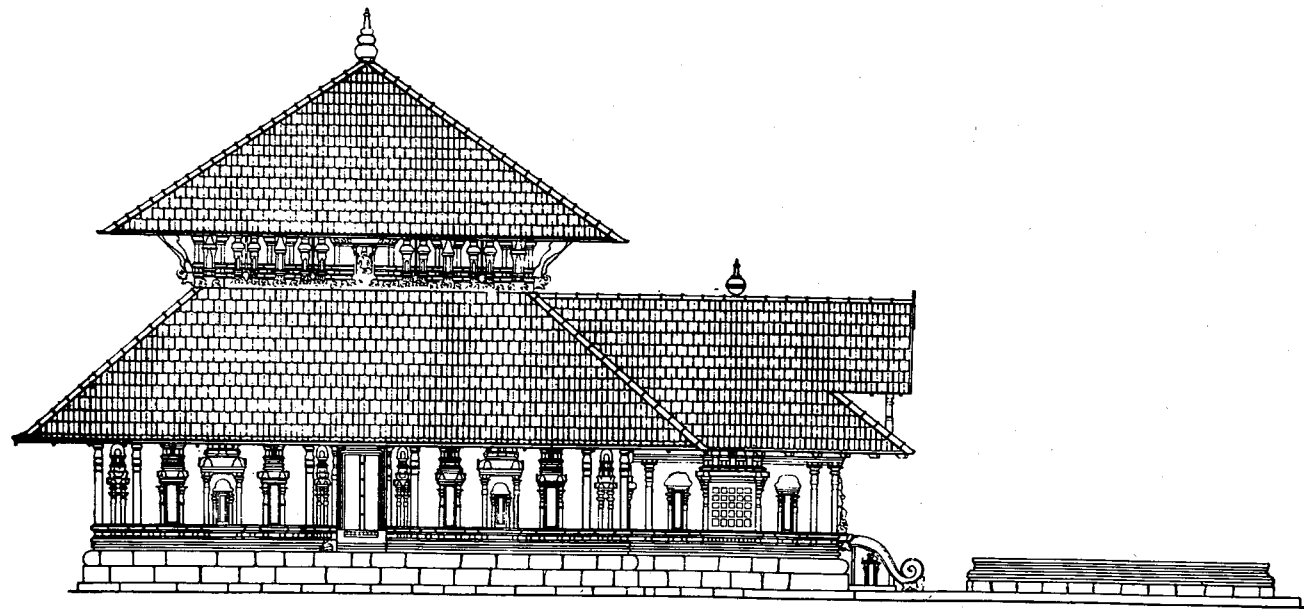
PERUVANAM: MĀḌATTILAPPAN SHRINE

DISTRICT TRICHUR.

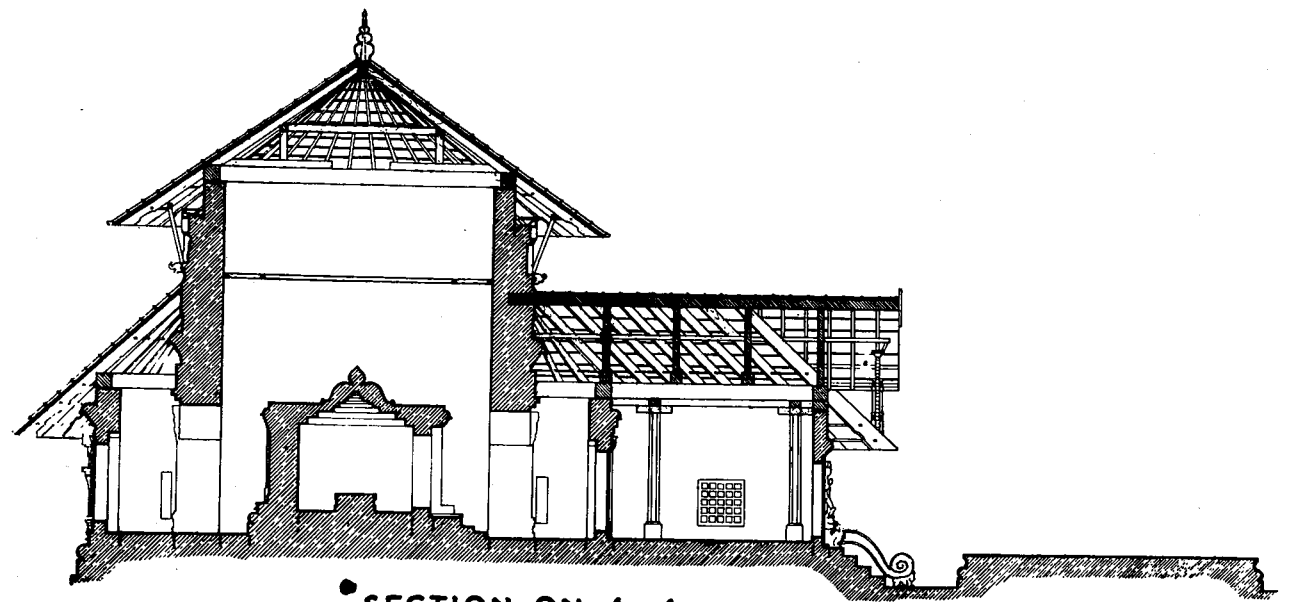


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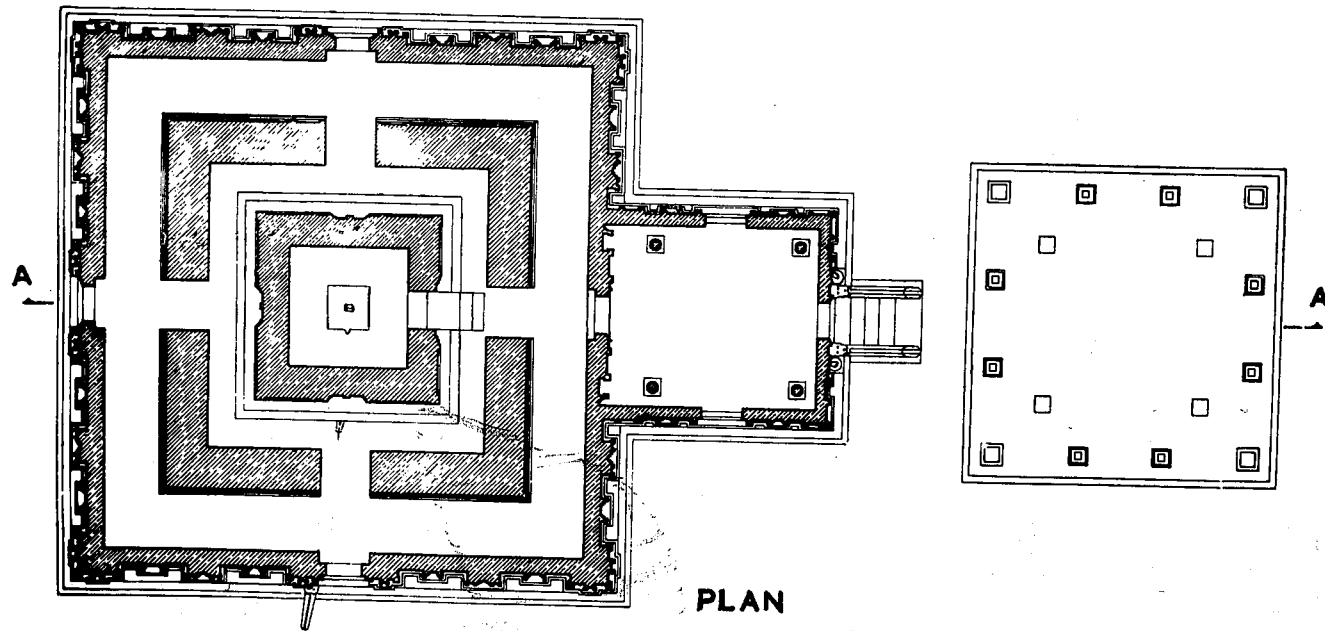
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SIDE ELEVATION



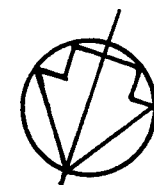
SECTION ON A-A



PLAN

MANIYUR: SUBRAHMANYA TEMPLE

DISTRICT CANNANORE



SCALE OF METRES 2 0 2 4 6 8 10

SCALE OF FEET 8 0 8 16 24 32